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{prologue}

[image]

This chapter has been edited and re-written from it's original.

//

"That's the sound of TigerClan warriors training for battle." Thunder echoed through the hills and ravines of a dense forest, reaching right into a large clan camp. The rumbling was just barely muffled by the thickly woven branches of the nursery's bramble walls. Stormkit shivered close to his mother as she recounted the story of thunder and lightning.

"I wish they'd stop training...," he whispered, curling tighter next to her snowy fur. Suddenly, the den entrance rustled, alerting to a newcomer. The dark gray tom poked his head up as a sopping wet blue-gray tom ran in, clutching something in his mouth. He strained to make out what it was, and just then a crack of lightning lit up the den to reveal a bundle of bright golden tabby fur. A kit. A deep roar of thunder answered in the wake of the lightning. Stormkit's mother, Lilyfur, immediately pulled her tail in close to wrap around him and his sleeping sister, Lambkit.

Closely following the blue-gray tom was his own den-mate, a queen who was expecting. He strained and caught a bundle of fiery red tabby fur in her mouth, and concluded she must have had her kits. She had dark fur raked with vibrant crimson tortoiseshell markings, and a delicate face and frame. The queen shakily put down the trembling ginger kit in her jaws, and it barely made a squeak.

"Asterfoot, what's going on?" Lilyfur called, a hint of worry laced in her usually soft, high voice. Stormkit pricked his ears with interest. Lilyfur was always so composed, but now she seemed a little scared. The medicine cat set the golden tabby kit in his mouth against the

warmth of the she-cat's chest. The rain from the kit instantly pooled in the nest and ruined the cozy comfort, and Stormkit squeaked in protect. Lambkit, however, was still silently sleeping.

Asterfoot began to lick the second flame red kit without an answer. That kit was larger the golden tabby, with the same bright red color as the tortoiseshell marks on the mother.

Lilyfur took but a moment to start licking the golden tabby she-kit's fur, and after a few warming licks, she made a squeak. Asterfoot sighed with relief at the sound, and continued to warm the tom in his grasp.

"I need to get Spruceclaw...," the soaking wet tortoiseshell finally spoke up, water still dribbling off her belly fur.

"You need to lay down!" Asterfoot meowed, momentarily stopping his licks to warn her.

"But the kits were early; he'll want to know I had them!" The queen let out a rough cough, her eyes shutting tight with the effort.

"No, lay down," the blue medicine cat said softly.

"I can go get him!" Stormkit squeaked suddenly. Even he was surprised he had said it. He stood up though, bravery pushing him up. He wasn't as big as the six-moon old kits, who were in the other nursery. There were two nurseries: the one he stayed in was actually the overspill den that didn't fit in the original nursery. His clan, DrizzleClan was quite the clan, one of the bigger of the four clans in the forest. There were four medicine cats, each with an apprentice, and several warriors dens. It was so big that Lilyfur said she didn't even know every single cat, just glimpses and names.

Lilyfur nodded in approval at his declaration, a smile touching her muzzle.

"Spruceclaw is in the Bramble Den," the tortoiseshell murmured, huddling up in her moss nest with a worn expression. Stormkit dashed out of the den, rain immediately meeting him. Thunder roared in the distance, and lightning crackled. *That must be LionClan*

practicing their battle calls! The little kit attempted to stay under shelter of overarching tree leaves as he crossed the clearing of camp. The Bramble Warrior Den was nestled at the base of the High Oak where the leader, Minstar, slept in an abandoned squirrel hollow.

The Bramble Den was one of three warrior dens, and it housed the best warriors as well as the Clan's two deputies. Stormkit cautiously entered, his eyes widening as he was now in an unknown area. *So big... it's kind of scary..!* It was dry and warm; a sharp juxtapose to him being soaking wet. It took a moment for his yellow-amber eyes to adjust to the dark. There were mostly massive cats, bigger than most of the adult cats he knew. He made a larger nest were two cats used to sleep together, but now only one lay. A toned, dark, dusky gray-brown tabby tom lay asleep. Stormkit recognized him, as he often visited the nursery to visit the tortoiseshell queen. *Spruceclaw!*

Nervously, the small kit prodded the master in the side. Large, almond shaped, green eyes cracked open to meet him.

"I-it's...," Stormkit racked his brain for the queen's name, "it's Cherryflower." He said in a small voice. Spruceclaw immediately was on his paws, which were massive and paler than the rest of his dusky colored body.

Stormkit followed hastily behind the warrior as he strode out of the den, and tried to use him as a shield for the piercing cold rain. It didn't work. They both arrived at the nursery, his short, downy kit-fur now on end in wet spikes. He returned to his mother, who had both of Cherryflower's kits warming at her side. The golden kit's fur was now dry, but it was sharp and wild, like the storm outside. Lilyfur immediately began drying off his gray fur with quick, hard strokes. Lambkit *still* hadn't stirred.

"Cherryflower's really sick," Stormkit caught the conversation going on between Asterfoot and the new-comer.

"She'll make it. She's a warrior at heart."

"We always hope for the best, but she was out there for... *StarClan knows* how long before I found her protecting the kits."

"Where are they?"

Asterfoot flicked his muzzle toward Lilyfur where the two newborns lay sleeping. Spruceclaw blinked and turned his attention back to Asterfoot.

"She'll make it," the warrior meowed sharply, turning and padding over to his mate. Stormkit looked up to his mother, her soft blue eyes resting on him.

"Will she make it?" He whispered. Lilyfur blinked. Stormkit thought his mother was brilliant. Elders complained that she was 'too young to have kits,' because she had only just been made a warrior a few moons before their birth. Lilyfur was always so aware, so confident. But not tonight. Lilyfur shook her head. She didn't know.

//

AN

This will pick up substantially in the next chapter. I'm not making an allegiances, because if you didn't catch it, this is quite a large clan. If you have a warriors OC you wanna put in, just comment the name, description, perso, etc. and I'll insert them without a problem (probably won't be a major character)

Edit: I added a lovely cast photo I drew, in order from left to right it's: Berrykit, Sparkkit, Cherryflower, Spruceclaw, Asterfoot, Lilyfur, Stormkit, and Lambkit.
BYE I LOVE YOU ALL.

Edit II: I went in fixed the formatting so it's neater, etc.

Edit III: I swear the prologue is kinda boring but just keep going lol it gets better!

{one}

He's so old-fashioned. He's already earned his way into the bramble den right off the bat, I don't know why he's sitting vigil. Sparkfur crouched down, watching a flame-red tabby tom sit quietly at the bush entrance to DrizzleClan camp.

She quietly stalked forward, lightly setting each paw down. Her sharply wild golden tabby pelt blended nicely with the brambles she passed as she neared the tom. He was sturdy, and well-muscled with a handsome young face.

She leaped, propelled by her long legs as she jumped, toppling him over.

"Sparkfur! Get off me!" He growled, kicking his paws into her side. She slid off him, standing up quickly.

"If you're sitting vigil, you kinda suck." She licked a paw, glancing at him with a sassy smirk.

"Shut up...." He growled, getting back into a sitting position. Her eyes lit up.

"Ooh, Berryfoot, were you asleep?" She wondered aloud, circling him. "Or... How about deep in thought?" She glanced at him. "I think the latter." She flicked her tail tip as she paced around him.

"I was thinking about the rogue situation." He admitted, his jade eyes glimmering.

"Oh, jeez. The rogue sitch'? We *just* became warriors...," the golden tabby groaned, rolling her bright, round green eyes, "..and you're sitting vigil! Nobody sits vigil anymore."

"I got accepted into the bramble den at my warrior ceremony." He said with a slight smile as he glanced around the foggy dawn

sky. "A little old fashioned never killed a cat." Sparkfur sighed, looking past him, as he brushed his head against her shoulder. She squinted as she saw heard something. She pulled away from her brother.

Silently, without warning, the thin wiry she-cat stalked forward through the thick undergrowth. She could see traces of pale white fur caught on a thicket. No DrizzleClan cat would go through a thicket, they were experts at moving through dense forests.

She kept her fur down as she followed the trail, the sharp tang of blood just barely hinted on the trail. It only took a moment before she found it: a sopping wet white cat with a bloody claw mark on her shoulder.

AN

Okay this chapter was much much much longer but I chopped it here where I could have a kind-of cliffhanger. I swear the chapters get A LOT longer than this haha.

Edit: edited

{two}

Thoughts raced through Sparkfur's head. She must have crossed the river, it hadn't rained for two days. She moved forward toward the cat. It was breathing. Berryfoot had just now caught up, bounding into the small glade.

"Sparkfur! Get back!" Berryfoot hissed sharply. "It's a FogClan warrior!" He snarled.

"*Medicine Cat.*" Sparkfur corrected, licking the shoulder fur of the cat where the wound was. The medicine cat let out a small groan. "We need to get her to camp."

"No. No! Absolutely not!" Berryfoot circled. His pelt on end.

"What, so you want her to die? Someone else will stumble upon her. It could be a rogue, it could be one of our own warriors. Who knows what they'll do! Let's get her back to camp." Sparkfur reasoned.

Berryfoot paused, considering. "How d'you know she's a medicine cat and not a warrior?"

The golden she-cat sighed. "Her frame. She doesn't have much of a build. FogClan are swimmers, and she doesn't spend much time in the water as a warrior would, otherwise she would have a lot more muscle on her. Also, you can pick up the scent of watermint, only found by watery--"

"Watermint? How can you even distinguish one herb scent from another?" Sparkfur opened her mouth to reply, but Berryfoot flicked his striped tail. "Forget it. Let's just get her back to camp and see what Mintstar wants done with her." Berryfoot grasped the she-cat by the scruff. She only looked a moon younger than the two newly made DrizzleClan warriors that dragged her back to camp.

As soon as they were inside the perimeter of the camp, Sparkfur

helping Berryfoot drag her in, they were surrounded by eyes of questioning cats. It was just past dawn, and cats were beginning to wake to a stranger being dragged in through the bush tunnel.

By the time the FogClan medicine cat was in the middle of the clearing, Mintstar was leaping gracefully down the side of the oak tree. He had slick pale gray fur and a feathery tail. He was younger, only thirty five moons, with dark green eyes. He stalked forward, at his side came Waspclaw and Sedgeheart: the deputies.

Waspclaw rolled his copper eyes.

"Sparkfur, for StarClan sake what did you do?" He groaned. "Berryfoot? I hope you aren't caught up in your sisters antics-- I don't see why you don't just *disown* her. I mean--" Mintstar cut him off. Sparkfur glanced over to Berryfoot, who looked on-edge with his fur ruffled. Sparkfur wasn't unnerved by the comment, she focused her attention on Mintstar.

"Please can we help her?" Sparkfur said with a clear voice. Mintstar glanced down at her, his expression unreadable. She held his gaze steadily. He opened his mouth.

"Where is she from?"

"FogClan. Something could be wrong-- we won't know unless we help her." Berryfoot spoke up. Waspclaw blinked, annoyed, but he didn't say anything.

"I think we should at least hear what the cat has to say." Sedgeheart spoke up. Sedgeheart had short, wiry, black fur and brilliant amber eyes. Mintstar nodded in agreement.

"Move her to the medical bay. As soon as she wakes up she will speak on what's happened." Mintstar turned and padded to the bramble den with Sedgeheart flanking him. Waspclaw hung behind.

"Berryfoot, come talk with me." He said curtly, leading the bright ginger tabby tom away. Sparkfur leaned over the thin body of the FogClan medicine cat, pulling her into the medicine den.

The medicine den was actually underground: a pit under a boulder.

Three large platform-like stones made up a sort of stairway to what they called the med bay. It was cool, with a stream of water running through. Several moss nests for sick and healing cats were off the the side by the platforms, the herb storage on the other side of the water. There were two smaller den rooms branched off from the main open space, as well. Of the five medicine cats and three apprentices, only one cat came forward to Sparkfur as she struggled down the steps with the weight of the cat on her shoulders.

"Sparkfur..!" The cat, a she-cat named Amberleaf, meowed. "...Who's this?" She blinked. She had a dark smoaky colored pelt.

"Mintstar requested her wound be treated. I'd do it myself, but your knowledge of herbs far outweighs my own." Sparkfur slumped down, letting the limp body slide off her back. Her fur was drying, but had managed to get the golden warrior's fur damp.

"Right...." Amberleaf looked Sparkfur up and down before turning to the herb storage. A blue-gray tom noticed Sparkfur.

"Sparkfur! Did you get hurt again?! I told you to stop mes--" he stopped as he noticed the passed out form of the cat.

"Hi, Asterfoot!" She said with a sassy '*don't hate before you know everything*' look on her face.

Amberleaf shoved past the older medicine cat, carrying the necessary herbs for treating wounds.

"What's happened?" Asterfoot asked as he neared. "What did you do?" He added softer, his eyes focusing on her.

"Nothing, I found her." Sparkfur sighed. After... the *incident*.. Asterfoot was the one to act like a father to her and Berryfoot. Always pointing out her mistakes, helping her, teaching her.

"Mm," he nodded approvingly, "and you wanted to help her." Sparkfur registered his words, staring blankly out in the general direction of Amberleaf treating the mysterious stranger.

"I'm sure Amberleaf's got it from here... I'll be back later to see if she's awake."

"It shouldn't be long." The blue tom confirmed. Sparkfur nodded and turned tail, bounding up the platforms and out of the den.

She came upon Berryfoot as soon as she stepped paw out of the den. He had a dark, unreadable expression. The brilliant she-cat tried to remember the last time she saw him with that face. She couldn't.

"Sparkfur...," he spoke slowly, not able to meet her in the eye.

"What's wrong?" She demanded, she could see Waspclaw standing off in the distance, watching them like a hawk.

"I need to get serious about being a warrior." He started, gaining some confidence as he spoke.

"It's literally your first day as a warrior." She grasped for a better hold in he conversation.

"Yes, but I can't be a better warrior--"

"You're already in the bramble den. That's only for elite warriors!"

"*Yes,* I *know,* but I can't be deputy one day if...," he was finally able to look up into her eyes. "If you're always hanging around me. There are so many cats in this clan, and--"

"I get it." She said sharply, making his fur prickle. "You're going to become another fox-hearted, power-hungry deputy." It stung, her words. She whipped around and began to stalk off back toward the medicine den.

"Don't you walk away from me!" He snapped, hoping his words could make her change her mind about him. Too late.

"Why? You don't want anything to do with me!"

"It's for the best!" He said firmly.

"No!" She paused in her walk, turning her head so that she could look him in the eye. "I never knew you were so *selfish.* Guess it's all in the genes, huh? First Spruceclaw, then you. It was only a matter of time--"

"Sparkfur!" Asterfoot appeared out of breath as he dashed out of the medicine den in a skid. "She's awake!"

AN

Edited 4/4/16

{three}

Sparkfur took only a moment to glance back at Berryfoot beforeturning sharply, her face hard and expressionless.

"You should go get Mintstar." She meowed steadily, not wanting to ask Berryfoot. That backstabbing horse-face.

Asterfoot nodded, just barely noting the fact the siblings had just fought. He turned and dashed in the general direction of the High Oak. Sparkfur was about to enter the medicine den to see for herself when out came a shaky, but walking, white she-cat.

She was thin and small with sleek, bright white fur. Her eyes were odd; one blue and one a yellow-green, dull with tiredness. There was a compound of herbs and cobwebs on her injury, Sparkfur assumed a marigold/goldenrod poultice, based on scent and appearance.

It wasn't long before Asterfoot was leading Mintstar, the deputies, and several of the bramble den warriors out into the clearing. Mintstar didn't seem ready to dismiss the foreigner, but he did briefly glance over to Sparkfur. The golden warrior returned the glance.

"Who are you?" Mintstar started out, sitting to the left of her. He was bigger than her in height and build.

She did not respond, just looked blankly at him.

"She couldn't have suffered *any* memory loss." Amberleaf reported from the opening to the medicine den. Still, a hazy look was on her face.

"Hey! How dare you disrespect Mintstar!" Waspclaw hissed from the right side of the white she-cat, and her odd colored eyes lit up with recognition. Sparkfur knew what was wrong. Waspclaw leaped out to the FogClan medicine cat, claws unsheathed, potentially about to

claw her up. Sparkfur jumped and stood in front of the stranger.

"Leave her alone, Waspclaw!" Mintstar tipped his head, interested. The suddenly bold she-cat glanced around at the questioning looks of the watching clan mates. "She can't hear from one ear." She said bluntly.

"I-I'm sorry!" The small white medic crouched down, her feathery tail tucking under her. "I-I can't hear from one ear.... I should have said something--I'm sorry!" Waspclaw growled something under his breath and sheathed his claws, backing away. Sparkfur returned to her spot next to Asterfoot, the blue gray tom touching his tail tip to her tail.

"Let's start again...," Mintstar moved to the side that the young she-cat could hear on, "who are you?"

"My name is Frostleaf, a medicine cat from FogClan. Well...," she had gradually sat up from her scared crouch, "ex-medicine cat. Some warriors returned from a patrol wounded pretty badly after an encounter with the Rogues." She swallowed. *Uncomfortable*, Sparkfur noted. "A-and Adderstream was hurt real bad. I tried my hardest to save him b-but there was so much blood-- and it was raining!"

She had a spooked look on her thin, narrow face. Waspclaw looked bored and annoyed. "He didn't make it through the night. His wounds were too deep... Gooseberry told me it was the rogues fault Adderstream died but..." She blinked, quivering. "Redfang, one of the deputies.. He said it was my fault. He attacked me and banished me." She looked down at her paws.

"That's great, but Mintstar really, there's no point in her being here." Waspclaw turned to the gray leader.

"P-please!" Frostleaf's fur actually *stood on end.* "The rogues will kill me-- I can't fight! I can only heal...." Mintstar nodded.

"Mintstar..!" Amberleaf whined. "All the medicine cat spots are *full.*" She glared at the outcast. "And even if there was a spot open we couldn't have the likes of *her* healing *our* cats. She's not one of us!"

The sharp words stung the young white cat.

"This is ridiculous. All she has to do is run fast enough and maybe the rogues won't catch her!" Waspclaw backed up Amberleaf. "She has no input in the clan. She can't fight or hunt and we have no need for more medicine cats." Mintstar seemed to *actually* consider this. He nodded.

"Uh--Wha-?!" Sparkfur's sharp fur was on end. Waspclaw laughed.

"Wow, got her speechless! That's a first!" He meowed quietly, flicking his thin, winding tail.

"You can't *actually* be considering leaving her to her death?!" Sparkfur growled. Frostleaf looked scared out of her mind. She had a right to be.

"I agree with Sparkfur. We'd be killing her, and I won't have that on my conscious." Berryfoot spoke up. Sparkfur glared at him.

"But she has no input to the clan!" Amberleaf retorted, her thick fur on end.

"Then we'd teach her." A tom spoke up. He was white with a patch of gray tabby on his face and front leg.

"Don't be silly, Cloudstream." Waspclaw rolled his eyes, "nobody wants to train an *outcast.*"

"I will do it." Berryfoot volunteered.

"Not necessary Berryfoot." Mintstar finally spoke up, padding next to the white she-cat under debate. "Sparkfur will do it." Sparkfur's eyes grew wide.

"Wha-- no, I'm sure Berryfoot wil--"

"Are you defying an order from your leader?" the broad gray tom neared Sparkfur, looking her up and down.

"Well, no, I just..."

"Then you'll start tomorrow. You'll teach the outcast to hunt and defend herself. And if in three moons the clan decides she should stay, she'll stay. Otherwise..." He looked Sparkfur in the eye. "She's out. Even if it means she *dies."*

{four}

[image]

They were in the tall meadow grass. It was so early the sun hadn't dried up the previous night's rain. Sparkfur sat still, her eyes closed, water droplets coating her legs and sides from walking through the grass. Dawn light barely peeked up, the sky was still dark. Green eyes flashed open and she darted to the side just in time as Frostleaf crashed out of the tall grass, landing clumsily where Sparkfur once sat.

"How did you know I was coming..?" Frostleaf hissed quietly, standing up and tipping her head so her good ear was facing her mentor.

"We've been training for three days. I hoped you'd understand your own paw steps by now." Sparkfur said bluntly, flicking her tail. Frostleaf blinked, seeming to not understand. "Your steps are like a badgers." She explained, Frostleaf narrowing her eyes, offended.

"I don't understand why we're doing this-- so you can point out my flaws?" She flicked an ear, annoyed.

"No. If *I* can feel the vibrations through the earth, think of what a mouse will feel!" Frostleaf flopped down on the small expanse of grass-less earth, getting soil all over her white belly fur. She seemingly didn't care.

"Why can't I just be in the medicine den? I'd be so much help there!"

"You know why. Besides, nobody in this clan trusts you enough to even pull a thorn out of their pawpad." The white she-cat blinked wide-eyed. "What? It's true. You aren't one of them, they don't trust you."

"Them? Why didn't you say one of us?" Frostleaf pricked her ears. Sparkfur cracked open her jaw, ready to speak, but she shook her head.

"Never mind. Practice walking lightly. You weigh as much as an apprentice, I don't understand how you have such heavy steps...." The warrior flicked her tail. Frostleaf breathed out and tried walking again. "No, no. You're putting *way* too much weight in your paws." Sparkfur walked her through how to walk lightly for the second time that day. Seemingly, some improvement. Sparkfur glanced around, bored of watching the grown-cat try to walk right.

Finally. Sunrise. "Fantastic..." The golden tabby stood up briskly. "Lets move to the shorter grass." She instructed, leading Frostleaf through the tall grass. The odd-eyed she-cat followed behind, trying to keep her steps "light." Little improvement from the previous attempts, Sparkfur noted.

"So... You.. Got any family?" Frostleaf asked, trotting behind. Sparkfur flicked an ear.

"Berryfoot." Frostleaf smiled at the name.

"He's cute--" Sparkfur rolled her eyes. He was a piece of fox dung. "--What I meant was a mother or a father?"

"My mother died when I was a moon old. I don't even remember what she looked like. Stormstrike was a kit and he saw her every day up to her dead; he says she was the most beautiful cat he'd seen and always notes that I take after her. My father left the clan following her death. He's a coward." She growled the last line out. Frostleaf ducked her head, and trying to change to a happier subject, she smiled and trotted so she was side-by-side with her mentor.

"So.. Stormstrike?" She twitched her ears suggestively. Sparkfur rolled her jade eyes.

"No. I'm not interested in him, he's like a better version of Berryfoot. Like a brother but never pestering me." She smiled at the last line.

"Oh. But you *are* interested in someone?" Frostleaf pushed. Sparkfur was getting on edge. She didn't like talking about herself.

"No. Love is a game I opt not to play." She said simply. They had

arrived. An expanse of short meadows flowering in the new-leaf sun. It edged the thick forest, the end of the meadow being the end of their territory. That was where two-leg places started popping up: one two-leg place where they grew oats and rye and crops as well as kept animals like horses and sheep. Then a den. And another two-leg den. They begin getting closer until they cluster into rows and rows. That's what elder Niko said. He used to be a kittypet, then a loner, then a warrior of DrizzleClan.

"Of course...," Frostleaf said dramatically. Sparkfur shushed her.

"Look, you see the bees buzzing around the flowers!" She said quietly, excited.

"Careful, they'll sting you!" Frostleaf warned in her medicine-cat-motherly way.

"I've been stung before, there's nothing to worry about..." She pushed away the warning, creeping forward in a hunting crouch. She watched a honey bee quietly for half a beat, before turning. "What's that?" She whispered, pricking her ears. Frostleaf looked at Sparkfur blandly.

"I can't hear out of an ear; you honestly think I heard it?" She sassed. Sparkfur flicked her tail, frustrated.

"No; I *heard* something. A.. Yell." She edged closer to the forest line, listening intently. She heard it again.

"HELP!" The long-legged warrior took off at a dash, the morning sunlight dappling through the leaves and spotting her golden fur as she rushed past. Frostleaf tried to keep up, weaving through the undergrowth without nearly as much confidence.

Sparkfur burst into a clearing. A black tom, blood covering his once-shiny fur. A leathe light brown tabby she-cat stood over her body, her green eyes wide with fear.

"It's Sedgeheart!" She wailed, "H-he's dead!"

{five}

[image]

Frostleaf looks like she was ready to puke. Sparkfur glanced sideways at her partner. She'd rather call her 'partner,' because she was way past the age of apprentice, clocking in at around nineteen moons. Young, but still six moons older than the young golden warrior.

Sparkfur sighed and glanced around at the cats milling about, talking about what could have happened. Waspclaw kept saying he thought it was Fallowtail: the she-cat who found the body. Sedgeheart had been the partnering deputy to Waspclaw. Sparkfur figured they'd be rivals-- she'd figured out they were actually good friends. Fallowtail was obviously innocent: Sedgeheart fought with his attacker and the thin she-cat didn't have a scratch on her. Sparkfur breathed in deeply. Attackers. There had to be at least two, judging by the thick scent of rogue in the air. It had traces of two-leg on it, so one of the rogues probably just left the life of softness.

She stood up, looking over to Frostleaf, who couldn't set eyes on the black tom.

"For an ex-medicine cat, your a little queasy around dead bodies." Sparkfur remarked.

"I heal *living* cats, not..." She flicked her tail absently. Sparkfur nodded, understanding.

There was a bit of a clamor as a gray cat swiftly leaped over some brush, his long feathery fur sweeping behind him. He skidded to a stop, dropping a freshly caught bird, his dark green eyes wide.

"Sedgeheart..!" He said weekly.

"Mintstar, we think it was Fallowtail!" Waspclaw hissed to the gray tom. Fallowtail was sitting off to the side, crying, while some she-cats tried to comfort her.

"Mintstar don't listen to that *mouse-brain*." Sparkfur stood up, padding over to the leader who stood at the passed deputy's cold body. Mintstar nodded deftly. "Fallowtail doesn't have any of the strength needed to murder this cat." She flicked her tail, pacing. "If Waspclaw had half the mind, he would have remembered we're plagued with the Rogue Band." Waspclaw snarled, baring his teeth.

"Cut it out for just one day, Sparkfur! Sedgeheart is dead!" the ginger tabby snarled. Waspclaw's a dull ginger fur stood on end, his dark stripes looking like shadows. Sparkfur was unruffled by his show of strength.

"I know he is, and it's not right, but only the truth will solve what killed him; not desperate attempts for an explanation." She said simply, flicking a look over her shoulder at him. Somewhere between sassy and just plain 'get rekt.'

Mintstar waved his tail.

"Sedgeheart was loyal and just cat. He did not deserve to die. Currently, the rogues are prime suspect."

"'Prime suspect?'It's obvious they did it...." Sparkfur mumbled in Frostleaf's good ear. She ruffled her fur in response, but the golden she-cat didn't know what she meant by it.

"We will keep looking into ways to stop the rogues. For now... We will take his body back to camp like any other fallen warrior. He will have his vigil, as he is entitled to one." Sparkfur turned on a paw and began trekking back to camp.

"Hey, shouldn't we walk with the others back?" The white shecat asked, trying to catch up to the long-legged female's brisk pace.

"No need. It'll get all crowded, and I'd rather get back sooner than later." Frostleaf nodded, struggling to match pace as they hiked from the murder-scene on the border.

Berryfoot looked up from where he was sitting talking to some warriors to see Sparkfur.

"Hey, Sparkfur! Just in time!" Sparkfur looked up. Did he even have

the *right* to talk to her? She breathed out shortly and padded over.

"What do you want, Berryfoot?" She meowed blandly. Frostleaf stood next to her.

"They need an extra cat on the border patrol, and I figured Frostleaf needs the practice." Sparkfur raised a brow. Border patrol? She *never* went on border patrol. Not because she didn't want to, but because Waspclaw usually scheduled patrols and he didn't like talking to her.

"Jee, hasn't even been a day since Sedgeheart died and your already trying to take his place...." She muttered. One of the warriors gathered obviously hadn't hear the news and was shocked. Berryfoot glared at her for the sassy remark. "Okay fine, fine. We'll go." She flicked an ear to where Frostfur stood at her side. "Where are they?"

"Over there." One of the surrounding cats, Sparkfur recognized him as Cloudstream, flicked his tail in the general direction of a few gathered cats. Sparkfur dipped her head to the bramble den elite and made her way to the patrol members.

She slowed, taking in the scene. Lambflower stood, gushing and flirting with a tom. Lambflower was Stormstrike's sister, one of Sparkfur's nursery denmates. Sparkfur didn't like Lambflower. She glanced to her partner, who had taken to talking to a senior warrior who seemed on guard with the outsider.

Sparkfur strode over casually. "Hey Lamb..what is it, flower?" Sparkfur knew the cats name, but she liked to see the annoyed expression on the she-cats soft featured face. "Sorry, so many cats in this clan!" She laughed it off, waving her golden striped tail. "Speaking of which, who are you?" She asked as charming as she could be to the tom, savor in in the jealous glare of Lambflower.

"Depends. What's your name?" Sparkfur was intrigued. She tipped her head up.

"Sparkfur."

"Ryeheart."

"What haven't I seen you around?"

"I've heard it's because you never go on patrols. Ever." Sparkfur nodded her head, shrugging.

"Doesn't interest me in the slightest."

"What does?" The tom blinked. He had pale brown fur, tabby stripes just barely visible but certainly there. He had captivating gold eyes.

"You'd have to see for yourself." Sparkfur had never actually taken an interest in toms or an interest in flirting. But she found it quite fun with this Ryeheart character. She flicked her tail goodbye, Lambflower rolling her yellow eyes in annoyance, and padded over to Frostleaf.

Frostleaf glanced at her from her almond shaped odd-eyes suspiciously, and Sparkfur twitched an ear. Cloudstream approached after licking the cheek fur of a dark brown tabby she-cat; *his mate,* Sparkfur concluded without a second thought.

"Hey guys, ready to go?" He asked. Sparkfur didn't answer, letting the other members of the patrol nod their approvals. Frostleaf padded side-by-side with her mentor, making up the middle of the patrol. Cloudstream was just in front of them, with Ryeheart and another tom in the back.

"I heard a MarshClan cat went undercover into the rogue territory last half moon." Frostleaf meowed to Sparkfur, but it was loud enough for the whole patrol to hear. Cloudstream *hm*'d his interest.

"What was his mission?" The tom in the back, a reddish-brown tabby tom, spoke up. "Sorry; I'm Cypressfoot." Sparkfur flicked her ear deftly in a small greeting. He was on the wrong side of Frostleaf, who didn't hear him at all.

"Probably just to infiltrate and get intel." Sparkfur answered after a moment of no answer.

"I wouldn't sent him in to kill the rouges leader." Cypressfoot said,

padding up so that he was side-by-side with Sparkfur. "How about you?" He raised a brow charmingly.

"Killing him would be brash and idiotic." She dismissed him simply, and he resumed his place next to a slightly smirking Ryeheart.

"Oh yeah? What would *you* have a cat do if you had them infiltrate?" The reddish tom growled.

"Probably just have them report back in secret with when and where attacks would be. Sparkfur nodded in agreement.

"It'd be a suicide mission, though." Sparkfur remarked, the patrol pausing as Cloudstream scented some brambles, dismissing it as Frostleaf's foreign scent from earlier that morning. It was quiet as they followed the border, Sedgeheart's scent still hung in the air, mixed with blood, death, and rouges. Frostleaf shivered.

"Guys, let's stop here for a moment." Cloudstream said quietly. They broke up, scenting over the area briefly as they took a moment to rest.

"He was a great deputy." Ryeheart said quietly, he gold eyes focused on the dead grass.

"Yeah, he was." Cloudstream agreed, just as quiet.

"It's not right." Frostleaf hissed. "They have no right to just--just go around murdering cats!" She scored her claws into the yellow grass. "Whether it's Sedgeheart, or if it's a FogClan warrior." Sparkfur hadn't realized there was so much anger building up in the soft cat.

"It's alright, Frostleaf. We'll get them." Ryeheart murmured comfortingly. Sparkfur tipped her head up. There weren't many kind cats in the clan, it wasn't as valued as bravery and loyalty; at least not the kindness where you are nice to the foreigner and caring to the widely hated outlier.

She figured that *must* be what made her like him so; she didn't like a whole lot of cats because none of them liked her. She liked Asterfoot and Frostleaf and of course the always amiable Cloudstream. But Ryeheart was more than just friendly and kind, he

was something she hadn't seen before; he was genuine. And she found that she loved that.

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AN

I was hoping to have this out yesterday, but I was busy. SO here :)

{six}

It had been two moons since Sedgeheart was found murdered. Sparkfur twitched an ear as she thought about it; she was annoyed. Of course, the youngest deputy in history of the clan was named: Berryfoot. That bright red tom was climbing the ranks faster than Sparkfur could sniff out Frostleaf.

Sparkfur crouched down. While the white partner had gained the ability of walking silently (just as quietly as Sparfur, in fact) she hadn't managed to learn to hide her scent from the intelligent warrior. They'd have to correct that, but so far the ex-medicine cat had managed to learn how to hunt, though not as well as Sparkfur had hoped, as well as a few battle moves. Sparkfur sighed internally, only one more moon to fully train the cat. She caught a glimpse of the bright white fur through some leaves.

She lowered herself close to the ground, her ears pinned back and her jade eyes digging into the apprentice. Without a second to spare, she leapt over the shrub that was hiding her, tackling Frostleaf and pinning her to the forest floor.

"Gotcha." She said with a slight smile.

"Let me try again!" She pleaded as the golden tabby got off her. "Please, I know I'll get it right!"

"We're running out of time.. Let's do some battle moves." Frostleaf visibly became downcast. "Oh, come on... You should be ready to learn!" There was a distant rumble of thunder. Sparkfur was used to greenleaf storms and found them refreshing; but Frostleaf always prickled her fur.

"Of course, let's not think about the oncoming storm..." She muttered, flicking her thin tail. "It's getting dark!" She added hastily.

"Let's get going then. Come on, start by defending yourself!"

Sparkfur lunged at the inexperienced fighter, who was brought down in a tangled mass of limbs. They struggled for half a second before Sparkfur came out on top, pushing the white cat into the damp soil.

"How do you *always* get the upper-hand?" She struggled away from the loosened grip, raindrops falling from the sky

"You have to push all your weight down on your opponent" the tabby warrior explained, dropping into a sort of crouch. Frostleaf nodded slowly, inadvertently mirroring Sparkfur's fighting stance. Before they could clash again, the rain began to pour down in sheets. Frostleaf's mismatch eyes were round with fear.

"Sparkfur, I don't want to train right now..." She whispered. Sparkfur flicked an ear.

"We're too far from camp to make it back before it gets really ugly, we'll have to find a place to hide out." She said quickly, her fur turning a darker shade from being wet. Lightning lit up the sudden gray darkness that loomed, the rain making it mostly impossible to see along with washing away old scents. Frostleaf made a small squeak as she stepped on a bramble thorn, and Sparkfur's green eyes desperately searched for a safe place.

"Hey, you two!" A voice called. They both looked up. A tom. Not just any Tom, Sparkfur realized.

"Ryeheart?" She called back. His gold eyes lit up with recognition.

"Hey, Sparkfur!" He purred, rain pouring through the canopy and rippling off their fur.

"Ryeheartttt!" Frostleaf half-purred. "Please, do you know where we can stay?" She was shivering, her long white fur plastered to her small frame.

"Yeah, Mintstar's set up rain shelters around the woods." He murmured kindly, gold eyes flickering back to Sparkfur. She twitched her nose smartly.

"I know, I just don't know where we are." She defended herself.

Testing him, more like it, to see how he'd react. He laughed.

"Of course. Right this way then," he held his tail up as he led them down a path to where a rotted-out elderly tree sat. They all were able to fit in it with a bit of room to spare: old but still usable moss spread about to make a nest. Ryeheart shook out his fur, beginning to lap at it in an effort to dry his fur. Frostleaf lay right down in the moss, her muscles aching from the day's training so far. Sparkfur stood at the entrance to the den, watching.

Ryeheart looked up to her, pausing in his drying-off.

"What's the matter?" He asked is his usual soft voice.

"Nothing... Well, I'm curious. How is it you were in the exact area as us? We're pretty far out, not many cats would come out here. Especially a patrol-junky like you." He raised a brow.

"You caught me" Frostleaf was laying on the wrong side, her hearing ear pressed to the ground, and she couldn't hear but the reverberation of voices. "I was in fact, watching you two train."

Sparkfur flicked an ear and sat down, beginning to dry herself. After a moment of silence she spoke up.

"That's it? You just watched us train?"

"I've never had an apprentice." Sparkfur almost choked as she blinked up at him.

"You? *You've* never had an apprentice? You are the pinnacle of good morals!" He dipped his head, accepting the form of a compliment.

"I'm in the Cedar den." He said, blinking. The cedar den was a warriors den for middle class warriors: ranked below the bramble den but above the huckleberry den. The cedar den was a hollowed out tree on its side.

"Wowwww." She lay down all the way.

"Really, judging? What den are you in?" She blinked.

"My own." Now he looked like he was about to choke.

"*Nobody* is in their own den."

"I am. Mintstar knows about it, he doesn't care. It's right outside the camp walls. If anybody asks about it, he says its a rain shelter." She settled down.

"He cares." Sparkfur raised a brow at his response, shaking her head. "Yes, he does! He *likes* you, Sparkfur." She sat up quickly, her fur pricked.

"Whoa, whoa whoa! Hold up! He does *not* like me." She blinked.

"Yeah he does. Letting Frostleaf stay in the clan? You wanted her in. You became a warrior a moon earlier than most. You get to back talk Waspclaw and talk him into things."

"Well, I don't like him.. At least, not like that." She relaxed, laying back down.

"Oh."

"What? Is that bad?" The rain thrummed against the tree bark.

"No, it's just, if I would have known that sooner I wouldn't have gone through all this trouble...."

She twitched an ear, interested.

"Never mind." He mumbled, getting into a more comfortable sleeping position. She did the same, her back against Frostleaf's spine, so that she could see the Tom.

"You'll tell me when you're ready." She whispered. *And hopefully I will be, too...*

{headcanons : 1}

Just a fun page of facts and head-canons (technically cannon) about the characters that I'll add to periodically, mainly making this because a bunch of sh!t is about to go down.

-Sparkfur was almost named Sparkstorm

-Mintstar loves Sparkfur, but she doesn't love him

-Asterfoot likes to think of himself as Sparkfur and Berryfoot's father, even though he isn't. He loved their mother, Cherryflower, but she loved Spruceclaw (their real father)

-Ryeheart was "in love at first sight" with Sparkfur, but he was too afraid to talk to her because he thought she was off-limits in a mates sort of way because of Mintstar.

-There are four clans: DrizzleClan (ThunderClan equivalent), FogClan (RiverClan equivalent), HailClan (WindClan equivalent), and MarshClan (ShadowClan equivalent)

-All four clans are the size of two and a half regular clans put together: DrizzleClan and SleetClan being a tad bit larger than the other two.

-Medicine cats *can* have mates if they wish as well as kits, but the medicine cat may not raise the kits.

-Frostleaf had a brother named Gingerpaw, but he was killed as an apprentice because he was completely deaf and wasn't able to hear the patrol leader yell for him to move.

-Waspclaw originally hated Sparkfur because he was jealous of her. The reason blurred overtime, and now he just hates her for reasons unknown to him.

-Sparkfur was originally mottled after Sherlock Holmes, actually. Frostleaf is her Watson: an ex-medicine practitioner. Berryfoot is

her Mycroft: a brother that she can't stand. However, A. I'm really bad at characterization and B. It's a bit hard to have a crime-solving detective in a warriors series, eh?

-Waspclaw isn't described until like chapter six because I'm a weenie and I forgot to, but he is in fact a dull ginger (almost a brown-ish color) tabby, his stripes are very dark and his eyes are copper.

{seven}

[image]

Sparkfur prodded the sleeping form of Frostleaf gently, the ex-medicine cat mumbling something along the lines of "go away...." and slowing her breathing again as she dived back into sleep. Sparkfur narrowed her eyes, annoyed, and prodded her again gently. Frostleaf opened her eyes slowly, breathing in the morning air.

"What time is it?" She mumbled, still with messy nest-fur and sleep clouding her mis-match eyes.

"Just after sunrise. You need to be ready, Mintstar is announcing his decision to the clan at sunhigh. So clean up, get a drink and something to eat." *Because it might be your last meal in the clan...* She almost added, but knew the young cat was too tender to face a horrible possibility. Frostleaf seemed nervous but nodded, beginning to groom her fur. "Do you think Berryfoot will be there?" She asked, a glint in her eye. Sparkfur shrugged.

"He doesn't talk to me." She saw Frostleaf pause in her grooming awkwardly as she blinked up at her mentor. "Wait... Does he..? Does he talk to you?" The white cat blushed and tried her paw at lying, murmuring a no and beginning to clean her fur again. Sparkfur breathed out shortly and turned on her paw, exiting the den. The two shared the den: a large stone that was hollowed out, a crack in its side facing away from passing cats, a fox length outside the camp walls.

She made her at straight to the camp. A good number of cats were out patrolling and whatnot, but it was easy to pick out Berryfoot with his flaming ginger fur. He was talking to Waspclaw and some other bramble den warriors. The golden warrior didn't pause, but padded right in between two cats: a white Tom with dark flecks and an angry looking Waspclaw.

"What is *she* doing here?" Waspclaw snarled. Berryfoot nervously

looked over at Sparkfur, motioning for her to come talk to him away from the group of elite warriors. Sparkfur sniffed and cut through to the other side of toms, Cloudstream waving his tail in a friendly greeting/dismissal. "I thought he disowned her..." She heard Waspclaw growl as she padded after her brother. She dismissed the comment with a flick of her tail.

"Sparkfur, how can I help you?" He was calm and collected. Sparkfur blinked.

"How come you don't want to talk to me anymore?" She asked bluntly. She had no other way to put it. "You just cut me off back when we found Frostleaf... You haven't really spoken to me since."

"No, you didn't talk to me." He retorted, his voice raising a tad. She sighed, frustrated.

"Yes, I know, I'm sorry, whatever. I just..." She thought about Ryeheart. He was kind and he would handle this situation with an apology. "I was mad." She looked back up into his eyes, green reflecting green.

"It's my fault." He finally said, "it was the only way for me to become deputy. Nobody would want me as the next cat for the job, wether it was back then, or five moons from then. Nobody would want me as a deputy if I was still... Protecting you." He ducked his head guiltily, "but my job, my real job, the one that Cherryflower would want me to do... Is protect you." Sparkfur turned, she was never one for all the mushy cheese-ball stuff.

"Right. Don't worry though. You don't have to protect me. I've got Asterfoot and Frostleaf and Ryeheart. Don't ruin your reputation, StarClan forbid Waspclaw becomes leader after Mintstar. And I understand the clan doesn't like me. But stay deputy. That's the only way they won't throw me to the rogues." She laughed, beginning to pad off to the Cedar Den. Berryfoot nodded his head slightly in goodbye, moving back to his cluster of bramble den warriors that he had been speaking to.

Sparkfur hastily poked her head inside the Cedar Den. Several nests were being occupied by late sleepers and cats who had been up into

the early hours on patrol. It was easy for her to find Ryeheart: he smelled strongly of mint. He spent most of his border patrols on waterside ones where watermint grew thicker than honey.

She had learned that he loved the water, even though he couldn't swim. Sparkfur hadn't the heart to tell him that she'd taught herself to swim, because that was a rather long story that ended in her meeting FogClan cats and nearly dying. She decided she'd tell him tonight. The past day they had decided on going to the creek at moonhigh: one of their many moonhigh outings.

She slipped into the den silently, weaving between moss nests. This was the main reason she didn't want to be in one of the warriors den and preferred her solitary (well, now she shared it with Frostleaf) den. She almost stepped right on a cat's tail, she recognized it to be Fallowtail, but she finally found her way to his nest. Is wasn't as squished in as the other nests: the other warriors in the cedar den respected him and gave him more room.

She carefully prodded him with a white-toed paw. He was different from the heavy sleeper Frostleaf, who took a few tries. Ryeheart poked his head up on the first poke. He smiled as soon as he realized it was her.

"Hey." He whispered in the darkness of the den. She flicked her ears in a silent hello.

"Frostleaf is about to have her warrior ceremony." She whispered. He nodded, he liked supporting Frostleaf. He would help teach the white cat fighting tactics when the bees were getting busy and Sparkfur got distracted by their tempting buzzes. True, he also helped Frostleaf pluck a stinger from the golden cats muzzle once or twice as well, which helped seal the fawn tabby tom and the white she-cats friendship.

Sparkfur sat watching the cats outside the den move about as Ryeheart groomed his fur, preparing himself for the day. They padded out of the den together at last. They were actually the same height, thanks to Sparkfur's long legs and Ryeheart naturally being a fairly muscular cat, handsomely broad, actually.

They sat down near the High Oak, laughing and talking about one of their previous outings where they had chased a rouge out of their territory, when they were joined by Frostleaf. She was buzzing nervous, glancing around at the surrounding cats. Still, after three moons there was a fair amount of the clan mates who didn't trust her, but there were some who considered her a true DrizzleClan cat, probably due to her kind disposition. Sparkfur welcomed her with a purr and a smile, a cheery expression only given to the white cat, Ryeheart, her brother, and Asterfoot.

"I think Mintstar is about to call the meeting." Ryeheart noted from where he was sitting, a string of bramble den warriors filing out into the clearing. Frostleaf visibly relaxed as she saw Berryfoot, the bright ginger to, taking his place at the base of the tree with Waspclaw. The grey leader soon appeared from the bramble den as well, making his way up to the branches of the High Oak, calling the meeting. Several cats joined, including the medicine cats who came from their underground den.

Clan meetings weren't actually required now-a-days, it was just whoever was in camp and wanted to go. Mintstar blinked down onto the crowd of cats gathered: most cats knew it was the Day of Judgement and wanted to be there in case they got to exile a cat. They were cruel in that way.

"DrizzleClan. As you may know, three moons ago a FogClan medicine cat was found on our territory and was taken in to learn the ways of the warrior. If she has succeeded in her training, she will join our ranks. If not, she will be exiled and never allowed return." Many of the cats blinked impatiently. Sparkfur looked over to see Cloudstream giving them a friendly flick of his ear, a beautiful dark brown tabby she-cat turning to whisper something in his ear that made him smile.

"Frostleaf, if you could step forward." The white she-cat padded closer to the tree. "I've spoken to the elite warriors and the votes have been counted." There was a steady pause, where zone young half-deaf she-cat held her breath. "They have agreed to let you stay as a fully fledged warrior of DrizzleClan." There were several howls and cheers of congratulations, before Mintstar silenced them with the raise of his tail. He kept down from the branch so they were eye

to eye.

"Do you, Frostleaf, agree to uphold the warrior code and defend DrizzleClan, even at the cost of your life?" The white she-cat nodded,

"I do."

"Then by the powers vested in me, you will now be known as Frostheart. We honor your grace and kind spirit." He touched his nose to her forehead, and she licked his chest fur out of respect. Cats began to cheer the name, and she returned next to Sparkfur blushing. Sparkfur softly congratulated her, Ryeheart touching his tail to her shoulder and saying her new name.

"You should go see Berryfoot!" Sparkfur smiled as the crowd began to break up. The white she-cat nodded, the adrenaline fading, and padded away toward where Berryfoot stood laughing in a circle of others elites.

"I don't know why she's been allowed to stay..." Sparkfur heard Amberleaf growl as they ragged dark she-cat passed, talking to a second medicine cat. Sparkfur turned and opened her mouth, ready to snap back a witty reply, when Ryeheart began to speak to her.

"Hey, Sparkfur, I can't do tonight. I got out on dawn patrol." He smiled apologetically, and Sparkfur swished her tail.

"It's fine." Sparkfur nodded understandingly, looking up. "I bet it'll rain tonight, anyway." She noted the darkening clouds trying to hide the bright rays of the sun. He winced playfully.

"That means I'll get a mucky dawn patrol...," in which she purred in amusement.

"And I get to sleep in a warm, dry nest." She laughed, running her tail under his chin as she passed, walking toward the camp exit.

"Wait up!" He called, blushing and chasing after her.

I'm starting to find Sparkfur annoying af soooo toning down her annoyingness now xP All of the shit that's going down? Next chapter, kits. I thought I was going to get it in this one, but it's getting a bit long (I try to around 1k - 1.5 k words.)
Ily!

I have a contest going on right now (September 19 - September 26) on my DrawCast (my user there is **mooseling**) DrawCast is a free social drawing app for your iDevice or android. Anyway, my contest is to draw one or more of the main characters: Sparkfur, Berryfoot, Ryeheart, Frostleaf/heart, or Waspclaw. You could do other characters, but these are the only ones that I did little color palette and small ref things for on the contest info sheet. The prize will be for the first place winner to get their drawing put as one of the picture inserts for a chapter! I might have the other people who place also get their art in a chapter, but all the top four will get mentioned in the authors note of that chapter, so you can check them out!

Catch ya later!
-Pop

{eight}

This is where the story picks up a great deal. The first seven chapters were just the exposition, and if you follow a plot chart, you'll know where we go next.... It's been three days since the previous chapter.

So, here we go.

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Sparkfur slowly opened her eyes, the warmth of sleep being drawn out of her. It was dark, just before dawn, she guessed. She felt someone moving, which she realized, was the reason she woke in the first place.

Sounds of sleeping cats surrounded her, and she flicked her ears, confused. She did *not* sleep in a warriors den, she slept in her own. So why was she in-- she scented the air, inhaling a sharp woody smell --the cedar den? She looked over, and knew instantly why. Ryeheart. He said he had been having nightmares the past two nights, so had curled up next to him and fallen asleep.

His sharp gold eyes spotted her still sleepy green ones in the darkness, and he blinked a good-night, even though it was almost morning. She stood up though, and padded out of the den, running her tail against his fawn colored shoulder as she passed. She'd rather not be alone in the crowded den.

"See you tonight!" She whispered aloud to him, and he nodded with a tired smile.

-

Ryeheart entered the small stone den belonging to Sparkfur. The golden tabby was sitting, talking elaborately to Frostheart, who looked overwhelmed as the golden cat explained something having to do with a cat in MarshClan who was a conspiracy theorist. She

looked up at him, smiling at him.

"I've got to skip out but I'll be back later tonight," The tabby purred, and the white she cat sighed with relief. Sparkfur brushed against Ryeheart as they both squeezed out the den entrance.

"So it's nearing leaf fall...!" Ryeheart noted, glancing at her as if he were hiding something, and Sparkfur nodded.

"I'm excited; the rain will let up for a touch with leaf fall." Sparkfur smiled, glancing up at the rain-clad treetops from the previous night's downpour.

"So, I've got some really, really important news!" He said, his face a light with excitement. She pricked her ears, listening, but he gave a challenging grin. "I can't tell you until we're at the creek though!" Sparkfur could already taste the smell of watermint, the river was the border that winded down to a creek.

They went on like that, talking about things like an amazing catch they had teamed up on, and how well Ryeheart's swimming lessons were going. Sparkfur had only been showing him how to swim for the past few nights, but he was progressing in leaps in bounds.

"We're almost there! You *have* to tell me now!" She purred, tipping her head to the side, and he flicked his ears.

"Not until we're there all the way!" After hearing this, she broke into a run, and he dashed after her. They slid down into short incline into the secluded creek, bushes poking up sharply here and there. Pale murky water bubbled around stones and large flat rocks that formed paths across the creek, that steadily got deeper in some parts.

Sparkfur turned to him, opening her mouth to ask him to tell her when she frowned, swiveling her ears back as she heard a very distinct thump. No way it could be from a rabbit: she had spent an entire moon with Frostheart teaching her to walk properly and knew what heavy paw steps heard like. She turned sharply, fur on need and emerald eyes narrowed. No way a DrizzleClan warrior, or any warrior for that matter, would walk so heavily.

Ryeheart had picked up on her hostility immediately and crouched down as well, his eyes locking with bright yellow eyes in the shadows. Having lost their element of surprise, the intruder leaped out, followed by four other cats. Their scent reeked of stale two legs and various foreign sharp scents: rouges.

Some say in battles that it happened like slow motion. But for Sparkfur,,, it was quick. Like the lightning that lit up the skies most nights. But not tonight. She ran her claws down a cats face: he was a dark charcoal with tabby stripes just barely visible under the half-moon's light.

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Ryeheart tumble back with another cat latched onto him into the deeper end of the creek, but she *knew* he wouldn't drown. He wouldn't give up that easy.

She was snatched out of her thoughts with a blow to the head, scratching her just beneath her eye. She ducked from another heavy blow headed toward her from a patched she-cat and pounced forward onto a grey tabby tom, unwinding herself from him just before they crashed into the stones, letting him fall to a terrible injury. She stood up quickly in time to see the patched she-cat coming at her, and Ryeheart stumbling out of the creek with water running off his body. The charcoal Tom was headed for him, blooding oozing down the side of his dark face where Sparkfur had clawed him.

She had to save Ryeheart: he was probably worn from entangling himself from the depths of the water. She slid under the calico cat and bolted toward the DrizzleClan tom, but to be snatched by her hind leg but said calico. The rogue desperately clawed out trying to land a blow on Sparkfur as she squirmed away, trying to get to Ryeheart who was fighting off the charcoal tabby and a brown patched tabby tom.

"Ryeheart!" She called out desperately as the calico patched she-cat ran her claws down the thin golden warrior's shoulder. She just managed to catch a glimpse of his golden eyes as she tore away from the patched rogue, kicking her hind legs out fiercely, causing the cat to fall into the creek.

She raced forward, she could just make out Ryeheart fighting off the brown patched tabby tom, but a light gray she-cat that Ryeheart had tumbled into the creek with earlier was now getting to her paws and back to shore. She watched her clanmate defeat the brown tabby patched tom with a harsh blow to the head, sending him winded and bloodied cat running.

But the black tabby tom was standing up with renewed strength. Sparkfur but down the pale gray she-cat's ear, blood spilling, and she earned a swing to the face, knocking her down to the ground. Her vision blurred and she blinked, dizzily, the she-cat pinning her. She could hear Ryeheart cry out in pain, but she couldn't see him. She wrestled her way out from the she-cat, sliding her claws down the rogue's muzzle, and bolted over to the dark charcoal Tom, who was biting down on Ryeheart's scruff.

She tackled him, and the tom whipped his claws at the air as she dodged. She could see the muscles under his thick pelt, and feel his heavy pawsteps through the soft forest floor. She swung her claws in his direction, hoping to hook him, but running out of energy.

There was just the charcoal tom and the pale gray she-cat still battle ready: the brown patched tabby tom had run, the gray tabby tom had fallen to the rocks, and the calico she-cat was weakly struggling out of the deep part of the creek.

Sparkfur breathed heavily, calling out Ryeheart's name to check on him as she dodged a blow from the tom, taking a kick to the shoulder from the she-cat, and then nothing. They ran. She tried to chase after them, but only made about ten fox-lengths before she had to turn back with blood dripping down her shoulder to check on Ryeheart. E hadn't joined her in the chase.

That was odd. He told her he loved to run. Maybe chasing off rogues was different? She limped to where his pale tabby fur lay, her pace slowing.

"Ryeheart...?" She whispered, her eyes dropping down to his body. Blood coated his thick feathery neck fur, and his bright, always intriguing amber eyes were now clouded and dull. Her voice cracked out, tears peeking, and she breathed out his name,

"Ryeheart...!"

{nine}

[image]

Fire.

That's what she felt.

Flames licking up and engulfing her, heat coursing through her veins. Sparkfur blinked out, watching a few of her clan mates quietly sitting around his pale tabby body. Some cat had tried to clean the blood off his fur, but they had given up.

Red stained his fur. He always kept sleek and tidy, a magnificent sight next to Sparkfur's unruly coat. She could see Berryfoot talking quietly to Frostheart. Her dear brother wasn't friends with the fallen warriors, but he was close to Frostheart who was feeling the impact of losing a friend.

Sparkfur refused to feel such terrible emotions, not again. She only experienced them once: the sickening feeling when she cracked his name out of her mouth. They always used to call each other's names to see if they were okay, but this time he didn't respond. She had called his name again and padded closer to him, and touched his shoulder with a lifted paw. She had seen his sharp gold eyes dull, and it scared her.

She didn't want to feel such a pain again, where she thought she was going to be sick. She had sat there by the creek water until morning when a dawn patrol found them like so: Ryeheart lifeless and cold and bloodied, Sparkfur draped over him to try and shield him from the world.

And now she sat at the edge of camp, shadows covering her narrow frame. Berryfoot caught her eye and quietly spoke to Frostheart before standing up and padding to his sister. There was no sunlight to catch his bright red tabby fur: just dark clouds from the sky with weak rays poking through.

"Sparkfur..." He said gently, and she stood up tensely. She didn't want to talk about her 'feelings.'

"No thank you." She said curtly without hearing another word.

"Sparkfur, please. He wasn't a bramble den warrior, so..." He glanced up at her and she flicked an ear.

"I know." She whispered. Cats who weren't in the bramble den or having a mate in the bramble den weren't given any proper burials. No vigils or rosemary to cover the scent. Only important cats got such treatment. *But he was important to me.*

She padded closer to the vigil that was about to be cut short. Asterfoot padded toward her, she could smell sharp and sweet herbs on him, and she immediately recognized it. Watermint. The older medicine cat had placed the sharp scented plants around Ryeheart's cold body. Her breath seemed to be knocked out of her: Asterfoot had remembered when she told him she was teaching Ryeheart to swim because he loved the water. He smiled at her lightly.

"I picked a kit to be my new apprentice in a moons. He seems eager-- did you want to see him?" Asterfoot smiled, probably a fake smile. She shook her head slightly.

"No, maybe later." She dipped her head to the blue-gray tom who blinked in surprise, before she padded off toward the High Oak.

She just stood at the base, looking up into its ominous branches, before a sleek gray tom with deep green eyes stepped out of the Bramble den. She could just see the outline of Waspclaw still in the den.

"Sparkfur." Mintstar addressed her, and she blinked.

"What do you plan to do about the rogues?" She asked bluntly and he flicked his tail.

"We're discussing it now, but we're thinking about doing what MarshClan did.." She raised her eyebrows in shock, ears pricked.

"Oh?" She breathed, closing her eyes. "I want in, then."

"I'm not sending *you* undercover to the rogues. They might know you're actually DrizzleClan and *kill you*." He shot back, his head lowered. The golden she-cat stood up straighter.

"Who cares? I've got no reason to even be here, might as well make me useful." Waspclaw had stepped out by now and was nodding.

"We should send her. She'd be great at it, with her defying attitude." Sparkfur couldn't tell if the deputy was being sarcastic or not.

"No-- we just... Not her!" Mintstar growled. "We should send a Bush warrior!" He referenced the lowest class den of warrior: bush warrior. They were ranked under Cedar den, and we're usually new warriors or warriors not very skilled in battle.

"No way! If they got in a jam, there's no way they'd be able to defend them self. I can fight well enough to be a bramble den--" Waspclaw glared at her with copper eyes, "--warrior and I *know* I'd get everything needed done!" Berryfoot had noticed she was talking to Mintstar, and had padded over. He looked upset.

"Sparkfur you can't!" He growled.

"Shut it, Berryfoot! She'd be perfect. She can fight and nobody would miss her--" Waspclaw shrugged as Berryfoot's fur prickled in agitation. "She doesn't have a mate or kits, and she probably *never will."* For some reason, and the she-cat wasn't sure why, his words stung her. Words usually didn't hurt. These were like claws being raked down her muzzle. Berryfoot knew it and was on edge, about to tussle with the older deputy.

"It's fine! He's right, but what if I make it out alive?" Sparkfur twitched her ears, and Mintstar tipped his head up. "I can do it!" She breathed, eyes a light with fire. "There's nothing stopping me, I can do it!" Mintstar nodded.

"Fine. You, Sparkfur, and a few other carefully selected warriors will be sent undercover as rogues to join the Rouge band." Berryfoot opened his mouth to protest, but Sparkfur closed her eyes with a 'thank-you.' She had nothing left to lose with Rueheart dead. Nothing left. And nothing in the way. Nothing in the way of her

getting her revenge.

--

So earlier I told you about a contest I was holding on my DrawCast! The picture featured in this chapter is the winner, the user **painting_Paw** from DrawCast is the artist! Her wattpad username is Painty_Paw but I don't believe she's active here. You should get the DrawCast app, especially if you like to draw on top of writing! You can get it on iDevices as well as Android. Here are the top four winners, going by their DRAWCAST usernames (I don't know their wattpad ones, sorry!) I highly suggest you follow them because they are all very exceptional artists!
1st: **painting_Paw**
2nd: **WarriorCats1206**
3rd: **Willow Falls**
4th: **sky dog**
Congrats, you four, and everybody else who joined! You were all great! My DrawCast is **Mooseling** in case you wanted to know :) I'm very active there, mostly at least once a day. It's really great: you make and post art, OCs, join/make roleplays, and make friends. It's got a TON of different fan-bases, major ones are MLP, Warriors, Steven Universe, FNAF, and just general wolf packs, dogs, cats, etc.

{ten}

[image]

The heavier rain season was over, but it still was always drizzling. It was raining that day. Sparkfur cautiously hunted, knowing a rouge patrol could come upon her any second. That was the whole point why she was hunting in such a dangerous place: the border.

She shivered numbly from the rain, recalling every word spoken to her by the bramble den warriors a week ago. She was to 'accidentally' run into a rouge gang patrol and join them and feed information back to the clans, potentially weaving up the ranks till she could get alone with the leader of the Rogues. Nobody had told her exactly what she'd have to do then, but she was was getting a feeling she knew what....

As the golden tabby pounced out at a mouse, purposefully missing and crashing to the ground with soupy mud sticking to her fur, she heard breaking of twigs in a nearby bush. She stood up, her ears pinned forward. She was 'pretending' to look scared, but she figured her acting was so good she had fooled herself.

"Hello?" She called out softly, a pair of yellow eyes peering out from the bushes. She backed up a pace, feeling fur against her hind leg and she bounced to her toes and she turned to see a pale ginger she-cat with a scar across her muzzle. The cat had sleek fur, defining a muscular figure.

She turned to face the bushes, crouching down. Three cats stalked out of the bushes: a broad strangely calico tom, a light brown she-cat with folded ears, and a very familiar, nervous reddish brown tom. Cypressfoot, the tom from DrizzleClan.

He had been sent in as an undercover just half a moon ago.

"Rust, whaddya say? D'ya think Cecil'll be willin' t' train a scrawny lil' kit like this?" the calico tom grinned. He had an ugly pink scar on his jaw. Cypressfoot had gone undercover with a different name:

Rust. A stolen name, actually, from a loner who had stayed in DrizzleClan for a moon around a season ago.

"I think so. Anything to increase our ranks." Cypressfoot--Rust--said, glancing at Sparkfur and trying not to give them both away. Sparkfur blinked, still crouched down in front of the massive calico patrol leader.

"I--join? What?" She finally spoke, her bright green eyes flashing.

"Join or die." He growled, baring his teeth. He was missing a tooth.

"I--j-join!" Mintstar had told her to act like a scared stray. Waspclaw had muttered something about that'd be too hard for her. She agreed to play such a low persona for the sake of proving the dull ginger deputy wrong.

"Great. We'll take you back to our camp.. Try not to piss yourself." He growled. The other cats immediately loosened up as soon as they turned, no longer seeming to be fierce and deadly. Seeming more like a warrior she'd see every day.

"What's your name, champ?" The she-cat with folded ears smiled big and bright. Sparkfur's eyes widened, confused. This was a rogue? Part of the fierce *rogue band?!* But she had fought them; they killed in cold blood! Why was she being so nice.

"Spark." The she-cat with the folded-ears laughed heartily, the pale ginger she-cat ducking in on Sparkfur's other side: she seemed a lot more quiet and reserved now rather than the ominous fierce cat she had just seen not two minutes ago.

"I'm Daisy." She had a soft voice and green eyes. "That's--"

"I'm Bray!" The pale chocolate she-cat with folded ears blared out with a proud grin. Sparkfur winced, she wasn't fond of over-baring cats. Rust stepped over to her, a hint of his classic flirty grin on his face.

"I'm Rust. That grumpy old cat is Fang." He blinked, and the calico tom flicked his patched tail sharply. Bray nudged the DrizzleClan she-cat with a grin.

"Whatcha doin' out here by yourself, anyways?"

"I--" Sparkfur recited her backstory in her head. "I was hunting."

"Yeah, a bang-up job of it! We watched you crash and burn!" The chocolate fold laughed again, taking a random bound in his stride, the calico patrol leader growled something under his breath as he led them out of the thinning forest, a sharp oily scent hanging in the air. Two-leg scent began to thicken and lingered like a skunk.

Sparkfur tried to hold her tongue, she missed on purpose!

"Yes, I always had someone looking out for me." She recalled what she had been told to say. "My mate died." It still stung, remembering Ryeheart's death. And then for it to just be passed off as part of her backstory made her cringe.

"Oh, you poor thing!" Daisy whispered, padding closer to the golden warrior's shoulder. "Are you.. Okay?"

"Yes, fine.."

"Don't worry! Now that you're one of us, you get to learn how to do all those things you depended on others for!" Bray tried her paw at comforting. Sparkfur looked ahead. She didn't need comforting.

"She's not one of us yet. Not until she passes recruit training." Fang growled. Rust seemed to stiffed, and Spark blinked. Something about that made him twist on the inside. The patrol leader crossed over a stretch of black two leg path without even looking both ways, the others following. Spark blinked and crossed after them hastily. There weren't *any* monsters.

She had a friend in SleetClan who'd tell her about thunderpaths with monsters that twolegs sat in and how they were dangerous, but she didn't see any danger.

"Where are the twolegs?" Sparkfur spoke up, glancing around in confusion. They were there recently, she could smell their scent in the air.

"They like to disappear at sunset. You really have been living in the

woods a while!" Bray called from ahead, "we live by the saltwater, though." The were headed east, and the air was getting thicker. The rain had stopped at around sunhigh, and already is the grass was dryer, and as the sun began to descend the air tasted of salt.

"We live in the big abandoned two-leg camps!" the chocolate fold purred, excited to finally reveal the location: huge two-leg dens were visible lining the salt-water that licked up at the flat two-leg made barrier of stone. They padded down a boardwalk, the wood planks groaning lightly under their pawsteps. She could smell rogues thicker than the salt, and a few were lingering around either on watch duty or just taking a stroll.

While the walk there had been friendly, almost immediately an ominous shift in mood occurred. The other cats of the patrol bounded away to head to the large camp, leaving Sparkfur following Fang with her ears erect and emerald eyes wide, trying to absorb every detail.

As they reached the broad camp, Fang slipped inside via a rotted hole. Spark followed suit; it was only big enough for one cat at a time. Immediately she was met by a dark inside, light seeping in gloomily from yellowing fake-openings in the top of the walls. Cats were lined up, forming a walkway for her. She tried to hang onto her composure, walk without looking like she was about to leap out of her skin. Bravery. *Act afraid when they first find you, then don't back down once you join. They want a strong cat in their band.* At the end of the lineup was a young, muscular, broad stone gray mackerel tabby tom with handsome yellow green eyes, but an ugly pink scar across his shoulders.

"Welcome to the Rogues, where you're going to make a real difference to our cause: to extinguish the clans that plague the forest."

--
AN:
Changed the cover! I think it looks cooler and the picture is way better quality. I drew the chapter picture obviously, and in order from calico booty to pretty ginger it's Fang, Rust, Bray, Spark(fur), Daisy. Also, there aren't a ton of clan cats under cover, only around

eleven total from all clans.

{eleven}

"I'm Cecil, head of the recruit training. You are?" The crowd had dispersed to bed down in the various nooks and foreign two-leg things, murmuring quietly.

"Spark." She held her head up, gazing at him with something of a challenging look. He returned it just as sharply.

"You'll be starting your training tomorrow morning, so I suggest you go find somebody to show you around. I've got better things to do." He flicked his thin tail before turning and padding out of the warehouse.

"He's going to the other camp." She turned quickly as a voice in her ear spoke. Bray bounced away so she wasn't right up in the golden warrior's ear. "Hey again! They make us line up every time there's a new cat to make it more cool! You'll get to do it for the next cat now your a recruit!"

"We should show you around!" Daisy nudged Bray softly, reminding the optimistic cat of their duties. The pale chocolate she-cat's face lit up and she nodded, Sparkfur looking around for Rust. They'd have to talk in private. She began to speak in protest, but she was pulled along after them.

"You're a recruit, so a cat in training, at least until you learn to fight and hunt." Bray purred as she led Spark and Daisy around, passing several close stacks of two-leg boxes, foreign foam substances stuffed here and there where sleeping cats laid. The recruit den.

"I'm a Rebel! That's what they call all the fighters. Daisy's a rebel too! And Rust and Fang and Cecil--well technically, but he also trains the recrui--"

"Bray, calm down!" Daisy laughed softly, swishing her pale ginger tabby tail. Sparkfur closed her eyes, impatient.

"Thanks guys," she forced out the words, wanting to go explore herself, "but I can find my own way...," before they could respond she turned briskly and padded across into the shadows. The tower of boxes spanned high, high....

She leaped up onto the lowest stack of wood boxes, gradually jumping up higher and higher to where the sills of the two-leg fake exits were. She touched her nose cautiously to the sun stained see-through hard surface. It was cold, and raindrops covered the outside.

"They call those glass windows." She almost fell right off the high sill that was perched at the top of the camp. She looked over to see the reddish-brown pelt of Rust.

"Ce--Rust..!" She growled, flicking an ear, the brief second of 'holy frICK' turning to annoyance.

"Hey! You picked *Spark?* How creative.." He teased, and she twitched her nose.

"Yeah, whatever. I don't know what kind of names rouges think are normal."

"Eh. Anything really, most of the cats here are kittypets and loners forced into it, but all soon learn to agree with the cause." Rust flicked his tail. Spark acknowledged his words with a blink. "Must be hard pretending to be a patsy!" Her eyes lit up in a fiery agreement. "Don't worry, now that you're in, you can start to be yourself. But not... Too much yourself, you know what I'm sayin'?" He gave her a side smile, and she flicked her tail distantly. "So, how's Lambflower?" After a moment he added hastily, "And the others. The clan."

The golden DrizzleClan she-cat rolled her eyes.

"You like *that* frilly little daisy?" Spark curled her tail tip. Gross. Lambflower was almost the exact opposite of Spark: she was quiet and simple and did everything she was told without question. The similarities were that they were both from DrizzleClan and both female.

"Yeah... I think she's sweet...," his fur grew hot and he ducked his head nervously. Sparkfur sighed,

"Yeah, I guess she's fine. I never go out of my way to see how she is, but I suppose I could ask Berryfoot in my next check-in... Why don't you ask on your next rendezvous?" He sat up, swallowing.

"I will. I was just allowed over in the allowed area until just after my initiation into rebellion a week ago. Where are you supposed to meet?"

"The dead grass field where Sedgeheart the deputy was murdered." She recalled, trying not to dawdle on why he sounded so tight within a few moments.

"Ah. They send patrols there a lot, we had unknowingly set ours to a different spot where recruits aren't allowed." He smiled lightly, relaxing.

"Oh," Sparkfur looked down onto the clan moving about to their make-shift dens of two-leg scrap. A mass of tipped boxes and several two-leg comfort nests were just a few examples of 'dens.'

"All the recruits sleep in the tower den, but the warriors get to sleep wherever they can find a spot to sleep. Well, they call warriors 'rebels' here."

"I figured that out."

"So how do you like it here? I think it's nice for a mission but I d--"

"It's fine." Spark cut him off, looking out the 'window.' She didn't like being surrounded by the intoxicating two-leg stench mixing with the fresh salty ocean scent. She didn't like not having Asterfoot or Berryfoot or Frostheart around. She didn't like not having Ryeheart around. But she had to be strong, that was the only way to make everything right. "So there's a second camp?"

"Oh, yeah! I told Beechwhisker about it, it's a twoleg stone tower. It's *huge* and it's where the leader and high ranking rebels live. So like, bramble den warriors and their mates. Also queens. I've never been inside, and I've heard nobody has seen the leader. He just

sends down his right hand cats to do all his duties."

Spark sighed. This was going to be much harder than she originally planned.

"Wait, queens?" She pricked her ears, a plan forming in her head.

"No, Sparkfur. You don't *want* to have kits in this place." He whispered, his eyes wide and his fur rising a bit. Sparkfur opened her mouth, curiouser but surprised. "As soon as a kit can run it's out into training. You don't want to go with that idea. Most of them die, and the leader doesn't care." Spark looked down again at the now bedded down clan. Only a few stood around on guard or talking quietly. "If you find a she-cat with kits, you help her get them out and somewhere safe if you can. I've already helped one she-cat, her name was Daisy." He laughed under his breath thoughtfully. "She was so kind." Spark's eyes glimmered as she recognized the name, remembered the sweet pale ginger tabby with the scar across the bridge of her nose.

"I have to do it though." Spark finally sighed. "It's the only way to get there quick enough." He breathed slowly, thinking.

"Fine. But not until you finish recruitment training, give me time to see if I can get into the other camp." She dipped her head in agreement, and he dipped his own round shaped head in thanks before leaping down from the sill using the tower of boxes, Spark watching him curiously. This was going to be a lot harder than she originally anticipated.

{twelve}

[image]

She had never seen anything quite like it. DrizzeClan had always been laid-back when it came to training: mentors would take their apprentice out whenever they felt the right time of day, sometimes with other apprentices and mentors and go easy and work them until they were at their limit.

This was nothing like that.

Sparring cats fought in pairs, an occasional screech of pain. Claws were *unsheathed.* But it was oddly organized. If a cat wasn't sparring, it was running laps or climbing twoleg boxes.

Overnight, the make-shift dens had been pushed to the sides except for the recruit box tower den that was being used for climbing practice.

"Come on, Spark! You're already a little late; Cecil'll have your tail if he doesn't see you soon!" Daisy dragged the golden tabby she-cat out of the recruit den.

"I'm coming... Where is he?" She looked around for the stone gray tabby.

"He's on the top of one of the recruit den pillars. Probably watching us." Daisy's voice was soft. Spark tried to forget what Rust had said about her giving up her kits, but every time she saw her soft ginger face, she had to turn away.

She had never had to face such terrible things like that in DrizzleClan.

"Move it, you pelican." She was shoved aside by a passing creamy and pale golden tabby patched she-cat, who glared back to Spark.

"Some pelicans could eat a kit whole, so I accept your insult."

Sparkfur sniffed sassily, tipping her chin up. The patched she-cat curled her lip and padded closer to Spark.

"You think your some smarty? I bet I could claw you so hard you're next of kin could feel it!" She growled.

"Please calm down, Olice..!" Daisy soothed, softly stepping in between the two fiery females. The patched tabby flicked her thin tail.

"Whatever. She was in my way, and I have places to be!" She spinned around and padded off in the direction of two unknown sparring cats.

"Someone's got anger issues..." Sparkfur growled, blinking up to Daisy. The pale ginger tabby looked down at her paws.

"I heard *they* killed her mother to get her to join." Daisy murmured. Sparkfur opened her mouth, ready to say something sharp, but closed her mouth. She looked to her paws and gave a small nod, and looked back up to see Cecil's yellowy amber eyes looking down on them.

Spark narrowed her own emerald eyes and clawed her way up the nearest pillar of boxes. Growing up in the dense foresty clan of DrizzleClan she was always racing up and down huge oaks.

"I'm here," she said boldly, one box shorter than the large gray tabby.

"I can see that." He stood up from his sitting position, scaling down the boxes. She followed in suit, annoyed and wanting to start. She had to get out, she had to go to the meeting spot, and she had to track down the leader, and she had to do something regrettable to them. That was what was going to fill that hole ripped in her heart. It had to be.

She skidded to a stop as she hit the cold strange ground: solid like stone but smooth unlike the ridged rocks in the forest.

"Well?" She glared at him, slim shoulders square. He gave an annoyed sigh.

"Olio, or whatever your name is, get over here." He half shouted. The creamy golden tabby patched she-cat came over, her yellowy green eyes burning holes in Sparkfur.

"It's *Olice."*

"Yeah, whatever. Spar with this sad excuse for a cat." Sparkfur's back fur stood on end, and the opposing cat grinned, unsheathing her claws.

"Sure." She darted toward Spark. It only took half a moment for the trained warrior to recognize how untrained her opponent was: the only tactic was a fire of hate. Probably hate building up from death. Spark could relate, and said cat twisted to the side with graceless long legs, rebounding with a pounce and landing on top of Olice.

It was an easy tussle, giving the warrior a memory of training sessions with Frostheart. She pinned the larger but not as skilled cat to the ground.

"How do you always get the upper-hand?" Frostleaf struggled away from Sparkfur's loosened grip, raindrops falling from the sky.

"You have to push all your weight down on your opponent" the tabby warrior explained, dropping into a sort of crouch. Frostleaf nodded slowly, inadvertently mirroring Sparkfur's fighting stance. "Right."

"Wow, Spark! That was cool!" Daisy purred, her tail tip twitching with excitement. Sparkfur glanced up with a slight cocky grin, Cecil watching her with something of a... smile...?

Olice growled and swiped a freed paw at Sparkfur's ear, clipping the cartilage and spilling blood. Spark bounced away, a bit shocked. She had *won,* she had pinned her, why was the cat still trying to hurt her?

Of course.

"Don't get too comfortable. They aren't safe, and they aren't your friends." Berryfoot had sighed, looking her up and down.

"It's okay. I can look out for myself."

Spark breathed quickly, trying to sort through her speeding thoughts. *Ear bleeding. Olice is getting up. Cecil is yelling at me to finish her off already.* The creamy patched tabby was coming right at Spark, to which she reacted quickly.

She sidestepped with quick paws, ducking and swiftly referring back to her warrior training. Claws sheathed, only her own blood needed to be spilled.

As close as she could get in the heat of the moment, she brought her front right paw down as hard as she could onto the poor cat's head. Olice dropped like a sack of potatoes onto the ground.

There was cheering from Bray and Daisy, the only crowd of watching cats, and the winner's fur grew hot. It was a pretty hard hit, and she wondered if it was *too* hard. She began to get hotter as Bray danced around her. She had never killed a cat, and while Olice was a prat, she was an innocent prat.

Cecil padded over, standing in front of Spark as she tried not to check on the patched cat. *Keep your eyes focused on him. He'll think you actually care about her health if you look to her.* She remembered that there was a time she wouldn't have cared. Then Ryeheart had come along.

"That wasn't too bad. You're better than I expected, but she *is* just a lowly recruit like yourself.. What's you name, again?"

"Spark."

"Right. I'm going to stick you on a patrol so you aren't wasting away here." He flicked his tail, and a thick calico tom who had been overseeing a spar between Rust and a heavily built gray flecked tom padded over. "Fang, take a patrol out to the city border with Rust, Zephyr, Belle, and this runt...Spark" the head of training turned and padded to watch the recruits in an ominous shadow. Spark wondered if it was required for him to act like he had a million secrets all the time.

"Come on then, Sparkie. I's only sunhigh an' we still hav' to get all the way to the border."

"It's Spark." She said as three other cats joined them: Rust, a pale fluffy pale gray she-cat, and a grey patched she-cat.

"Yeah tha's what I said, smart-mouth. Les' move, we're losin' daylight!" His voice rung through the camp as he led them in a run out of the warehouse. Recruits watched with jealousy smothered across their faces: some had probably never left the warehouse since they got there. Spark looked back just before she left out the small exit. Olice was standing up shakily, snapping and glaring at Daisy as the poor motherly cat tried to help her.

"Come on, deer-legs!" Shouted the fluffy pale gray she-cat. Spark nodded slightly, racing after the patrol into the stone path, foul smelling city.

AN:

I couldn't decide where to stop! I made an allegiances or a cast list or whatever of EVERY SINGLE CAT who has appeared with a description and name (with the exception of Ryeheart's murderer.) Honestly, Fallowheart probably has my favorite design <3 she's so cute omg. It's also the Prologue to Chapter 11 (this is Chapter 12) so Olice, Zephyr, and Belle won't be in it. I also JUST realized I didn't do full coloring on Amberleaf's eyes. KFJSJSHSJDNND THAT SLIPPERY WEASEL. FRICK.

{headcanons : 2}

Headcanons that are technically canon as well as facts, part two.

-I almost didn't kill off Ryeheart. While his death was planned from the beginning, I became attached to him, but I decided the story would be really lame if she got to the end and found him alive. Trust me, it's for the best.

-I also almost made Spark pregnant. I was literally so close to making her have two kits: two toms named Oatkit and Beekit but I changed my mind last second because I thought it'd be out of character for her to have kits.

-Sparkfur and Ryeheart were, in fact, in a romantic relationship if you didn't pick that up.

-The night of Ryeheart's death, he was going to tell her that he was going to be selected to move to the Bramble Den. Berryfoot was too afraid to tell Sparkfur after the event of Ryeheart's death.

-Cypressfoot/Rust comes off as flirty, and while his first meeting of Sparkfur he was trying to woo her, he ends up liking her platonically.

-There are actually only a few cats that don't like Sparkfur that have met her. They just tell everybody else Sparkfur is annoying af and not to talk to her, so the hate is basically rumors.

-Cypressfoot/Rust has a HUGE crush on Lambflower unlike any other cat he's flirted with. He sees them being mates with kits.

-The four clans share borders but they don't interact too much and rarely fight. They aren't strict on being friends and potentially mates with cats from other clans, as long as it's a clan cat. Rogues are strictly off limits friend wise because you can never. Trust. A. Rouge.

-Sparkfur has connections in all the clans who have taught her things like swimming, territory specific herbs, and walking through marshes. She isn't keen on clan specific fighting moves and styles though, because she doesn't enjoy fighting as much.

-I actually find Mintstar liking Sparkfur cREEPY AF. I ship SparkXRye till the end.

-Ryeheart was loosely based off of Capain America, personality wise as well as physical. If Captain America were a cat, he'd probably be a fawn tabby, though he'd have blue eyes. Ryeheart has pretty golden ones because I love gold eyes <3

-The rouge first camp for recruits and average rebels is a warehouse by a pier. The camp for higher rebels, queens, and the leader is an abandoned apartment building a short walk away.

-Lilyfur, the queen in the prologue who is Lambflower and Stormstrike's mother, is dead. Stormstrike's and Lambflower were around 8 moons and she was on a border patrol, dying in one of the very first skirmishes with the rogues.

{thirteen}

Tall grass waved small hello's, faint dreamy sunlight glimmering and outlining their silhouettes. They licked Sparkfur's shoulder as she passed them, cold and wet from the home-y freshness of rain. She blinked up, sunlight reflecting in her eyes.

"Ryeheart!" She purred, picking up the pace as she saw his figure at the top of the grassy hill. He turned, his gold eyes glimmering as he realized it was her.

"Hey!" He purred, running his head across her spine as she crossed to sit at his side.

"Everything's so crazy..." She whispered, looking at him.

"I know..." A dreamy, quiet swirl of faint missed dipped across the grassy valley the hill overlooked. "I wish I were there with you."

"If you were here, I would go back to DrizzleClan. I... I miss Berryfoot and Frostheart and everybody else, even the cats I don't know, just only know their faces." The mist was getting thicker, the soft sunlight still shining.

"I'm here now."

"That's not good enough." The mist was getting even thicker, turning to water. It flooded the valley. Sparkfur didn't want to address the issue. She just wanted to stay where she could only smell watermint and what she imagined sunshine to smell like. The water level got higher.

"You don't have to fight anymore, it's okay. I died, and that's okay. You should go back home, where you belong."

"Ryeheart... I belong with you...!" She half-begged, her ears turning back slightly, and her head ducking. The water got higher and higher so quick. The waves started sloshing at their paws.

"Oh Sparkfur...," he laughed gently, brushing his soaking wet tail against

hers, "..my Sparkfur." The water was getting higher, and Sparkfur stood up to avoid drowning. Ryeheart didn't move, just looked into her eyes.

"Ryeheart, we have to go!" He blinked those sun colored orbs in response. She took a step back quickly with a screech as a drop of blood rolled down his shoulder from the back of his neck, dripping into the now shoulder high water. Ryeheart still didn't move.

Her eyes were round and fear rolled off her in waves, her ears back and her mouth parted as she held back a cry of fear, "Rye--!" She began to screech his name, but the water filled her lungs, and she closed her eyes as tight as she could, the water level reaching her ear tips.

Sparkfur opened her eyes, breathing heavily. She blinked several times, looking around herself with eyes wide. She was pressed against one of the wood plank boxes another cat was inside for a den, and there were several other sleeping forms around her.

She was alone in a crowded room, afraid and yet still very alone.

Pale moonlight streamed in from the glass windows at the top of the camp. She stood up shakily. She couldn't fall back asleep, *she wouldn't.* She padded past a sentry who gave her a small nod, and she hurried out the exit, breathing in as much of the fresh air as she could. She liked watersides, they smelled like water-mint, which always reminded her of...him....

But the salty water that lapped up at the stone wall didn't have water-mint growing next to it, just cawing seagulls that always annoyed her. She hated it here, and she wanted to be in DrizzleClan.

Her training in the rogue clan was different than in DrizzleClan: she had a healing cut on her flank from a practice, as well as a permanent nick in her right ear from when Olice had clawed it. She had also realized Waspclaw was right: she wasn't as good a fighter as she thought. Probably barely good enough to be in the cedar den, if that. She had never realized because she was never really fighting, just....

She padded away from the wooden boardwalk that led to the camp.

She didn't want to think about the rogues, they clouded her mind. She remembered when she would observe the honey bees and learn from Asterfoot basic herbs, or talk to cats from other clans about what their territories are like. Learning was always something she enjoyed. But forced into a rebellion she didn't really want to fight for? She felt dumber than a newborn kit, but at the same time wiser than the wisest elder.

She was doing something good with her life. She was holding onto the memory of Ryeheart. She padded on a path that skirted along the side of a wide thunder-path. Fake sunlight poured from two-leg tree like things; huge, tall two-leg dens varying in height and size were scattered everywhere. It reeked of several dogs, some scents staler than others.

"Hurry, the guards are supposed to come around this way soon." She heard a whisper. She crouched down and stalked forward to the side of a huge den.

"I just... I don't want to have to say good-bye!" A small cry from a she-cat

"Just come on! Give them the prey and the kit and let's go." There was another sniffle. Spark backed up to the shadows of one of the fake two-leg suns, watching a dark tortoiseshell she-cat flee from the alley followed by a brown tabby tom that Sparkfur recognized as a MarshClan cat.

She watched them disappear before ducking into the alley between two tall stone structures. An artificial sun buzzed annoyingly. She heard a can clatter and among the terrible and heavy scents of two-legs, she found the mouth-water scent of a freshly caught bird. She poked her head over the side of a huge fowl smelling two-leg box object that obstructed her view.

A ginger tabby she-cat diving into a robin. A small dark chocolate, almost black lump of fur. A kit.

Spark would give anything to bring the bird back to DrizzleClan. With Leaf-bare nearing, she was sure cats from kit-age to bramble warrior status were dropping dead. And here was an over-fed

kittypet scarfing on a robin.

"What are you doing?" Spark said abruptly, unable to contain her curiosity. Why was a kit laying discarded and mewling while the two-leg pet ate fresh-kill.

"Eating what I'm owed! Why d'you ask?" She paused, her yellow eyes lighting up. "Ah! Are you one of them rouges?" Spark shook her head at first, attempting to lie. She failed, and nodded. "Ai then! Keep away from me! It's my robin, I get it for keeping that scrap of fur for a moon!" She referenced the kit that was desperately crawling blindly toward any source of warmth.

"What happens to it after you've watched it for a moon?!" Spark growled, drawing the kit toward herself. It was freezing, it's eyes were shut tight and it's ears were folded. Probably only a week or less old.

"Well I'm supposed to watch it until i's a big tom, but it can probably win over the heart of a people once it's a moon. The People juss' love lit'l kittens!" She began to bite into the robin again, making a mess of it and getting feathers all over her fur.

"So why do you need to eat our prey if your fattening up on two-leg stock?" The Gluttonist cat paused in the feeding frenzy.

"I'm attempting to try every kind of prey I can! I offer cats to take in their kits untill they're all grown up in exchange for a piece of prey of my choice. So far I've had rabbit, squirrel, thrust, a snow hare? I thought that one was odd, but just wait till I tell you about the kit I took in for it!"

"That's enough!" Spark hissed. The kit quivered and mewled. "You leave them to die!"

"From what I hear, it's worse being in the little rouge cluster then safe in a warm home!" Spark opened her mouth. While that was true, what was even safer than than the two-leg nests? A warrior clan. A safe place to learn and grow up strong. She looked as the shivering mound of fur. She just *had* to get it to Berryfoot. He'd take care of it from there.

"Could I have it?" She asked quietly.

"Eh?!" The kittypet stopped it's smacking to look up at the golden tabby.

"Can I have., it..? Him? Her?"

"It's a him. And go ahead, take it. I don't care, just as long as I get this robin..." She began to take another bite when Spark cuffed her in the ear, giving the long-legged warrior enough to take a big bite of the robin. She cuffed the defenseless ginger tabby again as she swallowed, grabbing the kit by the scruff and taking off at full pelt, the kittypet screeching and hollering about stealing the food.

Spark snickered, trying to keep the kit from smacking against her chest-fur, when she skidded to a halt. Two massive rouge cats stood in front of her: one brownish-gray tabby tom next to second black tom.

"What have we here?" Growled the black Tom. Spark gently placed the kit on the pavement, standing up straight.

"Spark, recruit, sir." She said, her eyes round. Now would be a terrible time to get in a fight.

"Go on then, what is this... Kit?"

"I-I found it, sir!" She tried to wing it. A good lie was better than the truth. If the tortoishelle run-away mother was found out, terrible things would happen to her. Death. "I figured w-we could increase the ranks.. Sir." She glanced at his expression, hoping for something of a confirmation.

"Okay. Are you acting as mother?" Spark picked the scrappy kit back up.

"Yes." She lied.

"Alright, follow us to the Stone Camp. You get to join the queen's den."

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AN:

I admit I didn't proofread this at all.

Also, I've realized how terrible a character Sparkfur is OMG she's such a Mary-sue lmao and because of that I kinda don't like this story anymore?

I have a second book planned out that has nothing to do with Sparkfur, but it's following the events of this book so I need this one done before I can start that one. Which will be great and have relatable, solid characters. So if you bare with me through this muddy book, you'll get a (hopefully) amazing second book.

{fourteen}

The kit wriggled and whined as they crawled through a small opening in a door, the bitter cold from outside the walls of the stone building not able to penetrate the warmer interior.

"Just go down that hall and pick a den" one of the two guards dipped their head and they both padded back outside. Spark's eyes were huge as she tried to suck up as much information as she could, practically tripping over her paws as she made her way down the short stretch of path. Guards were everywhere, three in that one hall alone. Twoleg soft moss-like material lined the floor, and it smelled something awful.

She poked her head into the closest room, darkness was what met her eyes. Her eyes met a guard's and they nodded slightly as they noticed she was carrying a kit. The dark chocolate tom that she held by the scruff made kept crying and she glared down in its general direction with annoyance. *He's going to wake them up!* She quickly made her way over to a spot that was seemingly warm. She knew nothing about taking care of kits: that didn't interest her in the slightest. But she was surrounded by queens, someone just *had* to know.

The guard wasn't watching, and a pale gray dappled she-cat lay next to her with four young kits. She gently nosed her own unnamed kit in the other sleeping queens direction where it crawled over and nestled it's way in. Spark flicked her tail and sighed, curling up.

"I have to do it though." Spark finally sighed. "It's the only way to get there quick enough." Rust breathed slowly, thinking.

"Fine. But not until you finish recruitment training, give me time to see if I can get into the other camp." She dipped her head in agreement

Spark closed her eyes with a wince. *Rust is going to kill me when he finds out I came here before completing my recruit training.*

Sparkfur was never a very heavy sleeper, she was always over-sensitive which proved to be a nuisance when it came to getting a good nights rest. It was still dark outside, dawn just touching the chilled air, when she woke up drowsily to the sounds of kits mewling.

Her eyes blinked open quickly as she heard a queen growling fairly loudly, "Whose kit is in my bed!" Spark knew: it was the one she was suppose to look after. She looked up.

The night before, the gray dappled she-cat had looked sweet and peaceful when she was asleep with four kits, but now as the dappled cat stood up she was muscular with scars lining her thick fur.

The warrior ducked her head, trying to look smaller with her long legs poking out. There was no way she could win in a fight with this cat. Olice was one thing: a newbie with something to prove. This queen was something else, something Spark wasn't sure of. No characterization she had seen before. An angry, possibly bitter, queen.

"Huh?! Hey you, Merry, is this little scrappy thing yours?!" The dappled she cat growled, grabbing the scruff of a mostly white calico she-cat, waking her and her two dark colored kits. She mumbled incoherent, still half-asleep words. The dappled she-cat let go of her scruff.

"Elise, calm down! I'm sure it just escaped from someone's nest!" Spark shrunk back into her nest, her ears pinned back and her eyes taking in the scene. She could probably outrun the queen... *But what about the kit? It can't just be my ticket in here, I've got to get it out as well....*

"Can it, *Butterscotch*, unless it's yours? I'm only taking care of the four I'm already cursed with, I shouldn't even have to! It should just be passed off onto one of you runts just like this one was passed off on me! So, whose is it?!"

"Elise, are you going off on *another* tantrum? You *know* the senior rebels can hear you in the next floor up!" A she-cat growled. Spark followed her voice up to the top of a tall tree-like object. Shelves poked out of it, each with a she-cat and kits in one, but at the top lay in a mass of two-leg moth bitten blanket, lay a magnificent she-cat. Spark blinked. She had long feathery light gray tabby fur and narrow, piercing blue eyes.

Elise flinched but didn't back down.

"Yeah, Arden! I woke up with someone's puny little kit--" a few she-cats who unfortunately had emotional attachment to their kits growled lowly. "--in *my* nest. I already have that mangy fleabag Kole's, kits to take care of!"

"I swear on the Clouds, Elise, if you wake up all the kits I'll have your tail! Look what you did: the guards are going to go get Kole. Congrats." The silky furred gray tabby set her head down, here eyes sweeping across the room and locking with Spark's. The golden warrior held her gaze, forcing herself not to shrink back. Not now. The icy stair glanced away as pawsteps sounded. Spark followed her gaze.

Her fur stood on end slowly

Her eyes dilated.

Was she feeling fear? She wasn't sure.

StarClan wasn't really practiced much in the clan, it wasn't even required to believe in it. But now... She was praying to her ancestors, and for what? She wasn't sure.

But as the dark charcoal tabby padded into the room, green eyes glistening just like that night, just under half a moon ago. A pink fresh scar stretched down his cheek, and she mindlessly remembered a scar to her forepaw from the same night. Did he remember?

Did he remember killing Ryeheart?

--

AN

Sorry for a while since last update, I've been reeeeallly busy. I don't really like school? Idk, whatever.

Also, I just found out the new arc is supposed to be centered around Alderpaw. Not that big of a deal, but his sister is named SPARKPAW. I swear I didn't know when I picked Sparkfur's name. And to top it off, Alderpaw's description almost matches Berryfoot's: a dark ginger tabby. Moral of the story: I didn't copy the Erin's, I didn't know at the time, etc, etc, and I'm **not** going to change Sparkfur's name because of this because it's not that big of a deal. It just feels less... Unique, you know?

{fifteen}

[image]

Everything seemed to be numb. She could see them talking, but noise didn't reach her ears. Was this how Frostheart felt? She realized she was shaking. Was it fear? No. It was something burning: anger. She narrowed her eyes, everything rushing to her forcefully.

"It's not our kit, so I don't want it!" Elise was hissing, talking to the charcoal tom. *How could such a monster even have kits?*

"Kole, tell her to calm down!" Arden growled, annoyance laced through her voice. *No, tell me to calm down.*

"Enough!" His growl sounded, making every other queen awakened by the fight instantly silent. "Just throw it out of your nest. If it belongs to someone, they'll come an' grab it. If not, it's obviously not worth it." He watched Elise, who was shocked, reach in and grab the dark kitten with wide eyes. She plopped it down on the carpet and hopped back into her nest to watch from her mass of blankets.

Several she-cats watched with interest. Who'll take the kit? It's mother? Or a sympathetic queen? The kit was crying for his mother, or any mother for that fact.

Spark watched intently as well, though not watching the kit. She was watching the tom stalk about in a bored manner. *I will destroy him. He ruined me.* Kole turned his broad head, seemingly showing off his scar. The dark kit mewled and cried and over time got quieter, and the others stopped watching. Kole turned. Spark watched, digging her claws into her sparse little nest, attempting to restrain herself from lunging and giving him another matching scar somewhere.

"I've got to be off, you know how the leader gets when he's left alone for a while..." Kole growled, flicking his tail annoyed. Spark

flicked her ears up. The leader. Her whole mission.

She turned to a dilute tortoiseshell she-cat next to her. She had three kits nestled to her side, their eyes open and ears pricking up. The kits were almost strong enough to leave the den, and every queen knew what that meant: they would be taken to the recruit area to train to death.

"Who's the leader, anyway?" She asked the she-cat, but kept her eyes on the charcoal tabby murderer the whole time, watching him turn and sashay away with two cats at his flank. Once he was out of sight, she turned all her attention to the dilute tortoiseshell.

"He doesn't come out much. I've heard he's mad in the head, though." She answered. She had a deeper, but very gentle voice.

"Oh, are you talking about the Leader?" A ginger tabby she-cat chirped loudly from where she was laying under a desk. A guard glanced down at her, his yellow eyes sharp. She smiled sheepishly and padded over across the den room, picking up the abandoned kit off the ground. Her soft ginger belly-fur was swollen, she was expecting kits. Elise growled angrily: the ginger tabby wasn't the owner of the nest intruder.

"Yeah. I just joined three moons ago, and I know next to nothing about him.. Or her. Is it a her?" Spark twitched her ears, the ginger tabby leaping up into her nest, curling up in Spark's nest. *Too close. Personal space, dude.* Spark fur tried to escaped the ginger long-furred tail that curled perfectly in the curve on her golden brown lower back.

"He's a he. I *swear* I've heard him yowling in the middle of the night. He's completely *insane.*"

"He knows how to lead when he isn't in one of his fits, though!" The dilute tortoiseshell added. "I'm Grey." She added.

"Spark..."

"Do you want this kid, by the way?" The ginger cat added, referring the dark chocolate kit that was curling up next to Spark's chest.

"I'm actually supposed to be the one taking care of him..." She whispered automatically, not realizing she was talking to cats *she couldn't trust.* They could tell Elise, and StarClan knew what she would do. Sparkfur would probably be murdered in her sleep....

Instantly, there was laughing from Grey and the expectant mother.

"Oh, my! Elise could probably eat you whole, you're so tiny!" Grey said between laughs. Spark's fur grew hot with embarrassment and she ducked her head: it landed on top of the kit. The ginger tabby swished her tail over the DrizzleClan warrior's flank as she laughed.

"I don't blame you. She would probably take your rations, and *then* eat you!"

"So, the leader? What else have you heard about him?" Spark said, trying to change the topic.

"There's not much more about him. You'd have to ask someone like Kole if you want to know *everything*. He's the dark tom that was just in here. Hey, about this kit, what'd you even name him?"

"Hm? Oh.. I haven't picked a name yet. I guess because he's not actually mine?"

"Don't worry, you wouldn't be the first she-cat to mother kits that weren't her own. Actually, Sarah is a cat over there," Grey tipped her white muzzle in the direction of a cream cat laying side-by-side with another she-cat, "she's helping her sister Hanna mother kits. Here, if you help me mother my kits then I'll look after this one for you." Grey smiled.

"I understand if you want out of recruit training. It's really fierce; look at all those fresh scars you've gotten, from training, no doubt!" The expectant queen added, referring to the three new scars on Spark. A claw take down her shoulder, a small scar on her flank, and another on the same shoulder.

"Where I came from, my father--" Spark stopped for a moment as she realized she had called Asterfoot her father. She had always seen him as such, just never *called* him that, "--knew about herbs.

He'd always treat my wounds."

"Did they kill him?" The ginger tabby said, before Grey covered her mouth with her thin furred tail.

"No. Why do you ask?" Spark looked at her white paws before looking up at the two queens.

"Usually, they kill useless cats who are younger cat's friends or family to get them to join. Like an older father or mother." Spark's fur stood on end. *Is that why they killed Ryeheart?! Did they think he was* useless*?!*

"No." She said sharply, standing up and leaping out of the nest. "I'm going out."

"You have to be back by sundown." The ginger tabby rushed out the words, hoping they reached Spark's ears as she padded out of the den quickly, pelt hot with grief.

Spark hated it there. Dead leaves swept across the pavement, hard on her paw pads as she made her way toward the docks. That was the way to the forest: cross the docks where the warehouse was, then the ground turned to earth and grass, then the forest line.

She'd be back by sundown. She'd rather not: she hated it there. No trees, little to no foliage, no soft grass to cushion her paws as she ran, no mazes of bramble and fern bushes as she attempted not to step on thorns. No friends. Just claws and relentless training. Neither had Ryeheart though, and that was all the rouges fault. So it was worth it: the bleeding paw pads from the freezing, hard pavement, the new scars, the boggy air. Because in the end: she'd avenge Ryeheart. Whether it was morally right according to the deceased tom or not.

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AN:
I want Sparkfur to be happy againnnn so I drew a happy Sparkfur with bees :)

{sixteen}

[image]

She always got antsy when she was left to wait, and a restless Sparkfur was never very good. It was worse than ever too, the cold grass brushing against her paws and making her fluff up her fur in an attempt to keep warm as she waited anxiously. What would they say? 'I've missed you?', 'Look at all those scars!', Or even worse, 'I love you so much!' She hated being told 'I love you,' the words sounded like a terrible cliché, like claws scraping ice.

The sun was high thankfully just warm enough to have melted the mornings frost.

"You have to be back by sundown." The ginger tabby rushed out the words, hoping they reached Spark's ears.

They'd have to hurry; if they didn't hurry up there would be little to no time for chatting. Sparkfur breathed in excited as their scent reached her and she bounced to her paws.

"Sparkfur!" She heard a voice call, and then a blur of white crashing into her.

"Frostheart!" She purred. "Get off, or else I'll get your scent all over me!" She mewled gently, her voice high with excitement. A handsome dark ginger tabby stood off to the side with a smile: Berryfoot. Sparkfur gave a slight nod of a hello.

"Ugh, you reek of rouges!" Frostheart groaned.

"Hey, I thought you smelled worse than a skunk when I found you, but I didn't say anything!" Sparkfur growled playfully. Both Frostheart and Berryfoot laughed.

"Wow, Sparkfur! Look at all these scars! Do they not have proper medical treatment there?" Frostheart looked over her friend's pelt. "These could mostly have been prevented! Although, not that ear

nick, that couldn't have been saved at all." She said grimly, touching her nose to the nick in Spark's right ear.

"It's nothing, now I at least will make some apprentices jealous." She grinned.

"Have you learned anything?"

"They've got a lot of cats. Oh, and the leader, he's insane. I haven't met him, but the rumors are that when he's not having some crazed breakdown, he's supposed to be a smart leader." She said casually, laying back. It felt just like old times: hanging out with Frostheart and Berryfoot.. Minus another cat, but she wasn't ready to let go of the happy mood.

"Have you seen Cypressfoot, Peachtail, or Pineclaw? They all haven't reported in, and some MarshClan cats said one of their planted moles was killed in training." Berryfoot mewed solemnly. The golden tabby nodded her head slightly, but Frostheart hadn't heard him because she had her good ear to Sparkfur rather than deputy.

"I heard about her, she went by Otter. I didn't know she was a clan cat.... Anyway, I have spoken to Cypressfoot a lot. He goes by Rust now. He has access to his spot, he told me, but I don't know why he hasn't showed. He goes out on patrols and such, in fact I just spoke to him a few days ago. I myself am in a bit of a jam but--"

"Oh, really? Tell us about it! Can we help?" Frostheart's ears pricked.

"Probably not. I'm investigating the second campsite where the leader's den is. He stays there all the time, doesn't come down. I've never seen him. I'm kind of stuck there, though. They think I'm a queen, and I do have a kit I found."

"You? A mother?" Berryfoot flicked an ear with a laugh. Sparkfur glanced at him, her eyes narrowing challengingly, but she didn't have time to get in with him.

"Yes. He doesn't have a name yet, but I only have about a moon

before he's big enough to leave the den. That's when the kits are moved to recruit training. It's a bit mad: they loose a lot of potential cats when they stick them out into training at a moon and a half old or so. As soon as they can run and play."

"That's... That's not right!" Frostheart whispered, her mismatch eyes narrowed.

"I've thought of several ways on how to get kits out and to the clans. The clans are safe and there's ample territory for our clan to take on more kits. There's so many ways it can go wrong..."

"But if we help them, then you'll be out of your problem?"

"Yes. More so, I just want to help four kits in particular: my friend's kits and my one--"

"Friend?" Berryfoot growled, sitting up. Sparkfur swished her tail. *There was nothing wrong with having friends.*

"Yeah. Her name is Grey, and she has three kits, and I don't know *that* much about her, but I know she loves her kits."

"You can't make *friends* there, Sparkfur!" Berryfoot growled, his fur on end, standing up from his relaxed sit.

"Well.. I did. It's just Grey, and there's this other cat, I don't think I ever caught her name... I could prob--"

"No, Sparkfur, listen. They're *rouges*. They *kill."* She stood up. She knew what he wanted to say. *They killed Ryeheart. That's what he'll say.*

"But these queens are innocent... Most of the cats there are innocent! They're forced into this!" She stood up. *I can't believe I'm advocating for a bunch of murderers--no. I've seen them, the queens. They aren't there to harm others. Daisy and Bray didn't want to harm others.*

"Sparkfur, it's okay... It was an honest mistake. Just don't get attached." Frostheart said softly.

"Don't get attached..? But.. These are real cats.. And we can save their kits from being turned into clan cat-murderers!"

"Fine! If you can get the kits here, I can talk to Mintstar and Waspclaw about allowing them to join the clan." Berryfoot turned, beginning to pad away, "but *don't* forget where your loyalties lie." He padded off into the shadows, his short furred ginger tail snapping behind him.

Frostheart turned her eyes from the retreating tom to his sister, who stood with a hardened face. Her eyes were fixed on his disappearing form, before she turned to the white she-cat.

"Sparkfur... He's just a little stressed lately. Being the deputy and all, and with Mintstar loosing another life to those rouges." Frostheart sighed quietly before standing up, reaching out to give her long-legged friend a friendly cheek lick; Frostheart was too small to reach Sparkfur's ear.

"I need to be back by sundown. Good-bye Frostheart, we'll see each other soon." Spark turned on her paw, looking back one last time to see her narrow pale face sporting a friendly smile. DrizzleClan *was* her home. She wasn't doubting anything. Though the weather had changed from its usual perpetual rain to wind and frost, it was still her home.

Berryfoot doesn't think I'm loyal.. She sniffed the air, checking both sides before crossing the small stone path. Two-legs traveled there a lot. She could see a cream tabby she recognized as Otis, but she never like talking to him. He waved his tail and trotted up. He was thick and as tall as her.

"Hey, Scrub." He grinned. Though his fur wasn't even close to touching hers, she glared up at him. Too close for comfort.

"Go away." She growled.

"I heard you moved to the stone den! Couldn't handle recruit training, eh? I understand, I probably hit you too hard a few times." He flicked his ear in the general direction of the scars lining her right shoulder blade.

"Actually, for starters, they were from some one else, though I don't remember who, it was probably from someone that's a better fighter than you."

"Listen, you scrub, I could destroy you, but you're a she-cat and I don't want that on my record." She immediately turned her head to face the cream tabby, her emerald eyes piercing into his copper ones.

"I honestly don't want to reply to that last remark because I don't want you to feel all sad about yourself. After all, a she-cat can just join the Stone Camp, but a tom would be killed if he wants to stop training." She growled in a mocking tone.

"Oh, get lost, Scru--"

"I swear if you call me 'scrub' one more time I'll have to claw your ear off." She snapped, taking brisk steps now. They were getting closer to the camps, she knew because cats she vaguely recognized were lingering about, trying to scavenge food.

"You'd probably miss, you did quit to join queens. What kind of cat gives up a fighters life for that anyway?" *Someone who's trying to keep cats from being murdered.*

"I don't even know what we're fighting *for."* She growled.

"Of course you don't, you're a scrub!" She shot a glare in his direction and he shot her a broad smile. "We're going to force the clan cats off their territory so that we have a place. You would know, the battle plans were released this morning. And I'm going on the front lines! Tomorrow at dawn, blah blah, I'll spare you the details. You probably couldn't process them because you're a scrub!" Otis laughed again, and she lunged at him, swiping her claws at his ear. The lingering cats all pricked up as they heard him screech when he saw the blood flow down his cheek.

"Hey! Are you two fighting!" Shouted a cat. Spark breathed in, her eyes wide. She wasn't really thinking this through, just kind of winging it....

She leaped at him again, both of me tumbling over. He brought his claws down on her, she couldn't quite tell where though because small pebbles were digging into her back and making her cringe. She kicked her hind paws into his belly before he could do any real damage. A few cats had come by then, intercepting it.

"You guys know the rules: no sparring outside of recruits camp!"

"She started it!" Otis growled, blood oozing down his face from his left ear which was shredded. Sparkfur panted, her own blood tricking down her long forelegs from a slash in between her front limbs.

"You should have left me alone..." She lied. She just needed to not be camp bound for the night. The punishment for fighting without being in training was always the same: a night outside in the bitter cold without food or water for two days. She had asked every cat that had came back from the ordeal so she knew for future reference.

"Your crazy." He whispered, he turned to the stormy gray she-cat that was blocking him from going at Sparkfur. "She's insane!" He said louder. "I shouldn't be punished, she's the mad one!"

"Shut up, Otie. You're *both* going to see Kole." The stormy gray cat growled. Sparkfur's eyes widened. This part... This part she didn't expect.

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AN

GUYS I LOVE YOU ALL SO MUCH.

NOT ONLY DO WE HAVE 700+ READS
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Thank you so so much! All of you, thank you, silent readers and readers who comment and vote!

Edit: added some artwork. It's Grey (dilute tortie) with her three kits, Florence (the ginger expectant queen that I never actually

mentioned by name), the dark tom kit (you'll find his name out later >:^P), and Sparkfur.

{seventeen}

[image]

Don't blow it.

You're too far in.

But he murdered *Ryeheart.*

He doesn't deserve my attention, time, or for me to stress over him.

But I can't blow my cover. There's no way I could run back to DrizzleClan.

Sparkfur sat in silence, seemingly not worrying, but inside... It felt like a black hole was sucking at her insides. The stormy grey she-cat next to her had a stone hard face. *Distract yourself.* Sparkfur told herself. So she observed.

The stormy cat was putting up a facade, she was obviously stressing. Occasional tail twitches, and she was straight as a board. For what *she* was stressing about, Sparkfur wasn't sure. Was it meeting Kole? Spark smirked. *I bet she's never met Kole.* Spark glanced over at Otis, who was fidgeting and whining occasionally that it wasn't his fault. *She's lucky she hasn't.*

Spark licked at her blood stained legs, the wound aching. Otis had been given some cobwebs. Sparkfur had noticed that since she hadn't gotten any, her chances of getting off the hook were slim to none. *But that's what I was going for.* She heard paw steps, and her heart fluttered. She wasn't sure why; there was no need to worry. *This is what I planned. Well...* She saw his green eyes emerge from the shadows, his pelt of dark tabby just looked like it belonged where he came from. *I didn't plan this.*

"You there. Recruit." He addressed Sparkfur, and she blinked. He called her recruit. He should have been informed that she wasn't in recruit training anymore. Gossip spread like wildfire around there.

She tried to respond, honest, but her throat seemed to close up. She was *talking to Ryeheart's killer.* She swallowed, and tipped her head up.

"Yes," was all she could say. His green eyes radiated a cold atmosphere. Up close, his features looked much younger than she had remembered. Large, young, round eyes, fur clear of scars (excluding the one she had given him on his cheek). How could a cat that had gone through recruit training come out unscathed?

"You, recruit, you're free to go. Quite being an annoying prat and do something to make your fellow rebels proud." He addressed Otis, who scampered away without being told twice. Spark turned to go, as well, hoping to get out. She figured this wasn't normal for punishment. "Where do you think you're going?" He circled her, and she unsheathed and sheathed her claws in a frustrated manner.

"Back to camp." She growled, glaring at him, reflecting the hostility he had that night.

"Oh no, don't think I forgot you. *Clan cat."* The storm gray she-cat instantly stood up, her fur on end.

"Kole, what are you talking about? She's been here for over half a moon!" she growled lowly, giving dark looks to Sparkfur, who's eyes were wide, and fur on end. *They're bluffing, there's no way they know! He would've said something this morning when he saw me!*

"I'm sorry, Grace. You should go back to camp." Kole directed his attention to the rebel, who didn't move. Kole rolled his eyes and unsheathed his claws. "Go to camp, now." He snarled. Grace darted away in the direction of the boardwalk, and the charcoal tabby turned his full attention back to Sparkfur. "So, would you like to explain to me why you, a clan cat, are here?" He growled. She swore there was a slight smirk on his face.

"I-I'm not a clan cat! I'm just like you: a rebel!" Spark half pleaded.

"Yeah, sure. We'll have to take this conversation up to the roof." He tipped his head up. Just barely in the dusk sky, the flat roof of the Stone Camp could be made out. Her mouth parted slightly.

"Isn't that where the leader is...?" She whispered.

"Yeah, and don't get your hopes up. I'll be there the whole time so you be able to lay a claw on him, like your clan told you to do." He nudged her toward the door, and she reluctantly went.

"I don't know what you're talking about!" She was scrambling to keep her story together. *Can't fall apart now.* The pressing need to tear his pelt off wasn't as present as their earlier meeting: now she just wanted to get away. She went up the steps, and Kole kept shoving her to go faster, and she'd hiss a sharp remark.

"I remember you, you know. You can stop pretending." He noted, glancing at her with a hint of malice.

"Yeah, you saw me this morning." She growled.

"No, no!" He laughed gently, coming to a stop at a landing between two flights of stairs. She parted her mouth as she caught her breath. "We killed that tom. It was supposed to be in and out, but you were there. I'm sure you remember." He narrowed his eyes, a smile playing across his muzzle. Her few was hot and bristling. There was no way she could stay undercover anymore, he *knew.* There's was no denying it.

"His name was Ryeheart." She growled, her eyes dark. She forced herself not to cry-- not in front of a murderer. And for some reason, at seeing her upset reaction, he began padding up the next set of stairs as if it had never happened.

"Come on, the leader wishes to see you." He glanced over his shoulder to see her reaction. She sprinted past him, skidding to a stop ahead at the top of that landing.

"Not until you tell me why you killed him!" She snapped, the outline of her fur barely visible in the dark stairwell.

"I don't have time to talk. Let's hurry up and see him, then you'll know. Before he kills you, of course," he smiled as he brushed past her. He smelled like a mix of rouge, pine, and stale air. "I'd hate to get blood on my paws, but he's not much of a pacifist. And he's got

it out for clan cats!" He sprinted up the steps with the last sentence, and she streaked after him.

At the top, there was a door. Cold air seeped in through the long broken window, boxes piled up next to it. Kole climbed up and looked down at her. "Come on then! We haven't got all night." Spark blinked.

This was the whole point of coming here. The whole point. Everything was paying off. *I refuse to die before I get that stupid kit out of here. I still have responsibilities. I still have Frostheart, I'm sure she still needs help with fight training. And Berryfoot would probably love to see some of the fighting techniques I learned. He was always such a geek about that.*

She breathed out, not realizing she had been holding her breathe, and climbed up the boxes. Cold air blasted her in the face as she looked out the shattered, thin window.

"After you," she said curtly, and Kole obliged by squeezing out the window: his broad frame didn't fir nearly as well as her own long and slim one. She landed on her paws.

There was a small barrier the height of a full grown cat that lined the roof, and it was mostly dark. Just the half-moon dimly lit up the flat top. She could just make out the figure of a cat huddled up in the shadows, and Kole stood off to the side of her. His face was glowing. He was *excited* to see this go down.

"Just wait till you hear him talk." Kole whispered, his eyes never leaving the spot of where she assumed that putrid smell of rouge was coming from. "He's a great story teller!"

"Is this who you were talking about?" Came a low voice. Her fur prickled, she couldn't help it. Her heart was beating, faster and faster.

Asterfoot would tell me to calm down or else he'd have to give me lavender.

"Yes, Father." Kole bowed his head, but his green eyes peeled to see

the golden tabby warrior.

"Well then." The cat moved out of the shadows. Her heart seemed to stop

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AN
Haha

{eighteen}

Sparkfur was afraid of a select few things: dogs, trees falling on her, if it stops raining, and getting lost in a snowstorm. None had ever hurt her, but they still scared her. Irrational, but at the same time, rational fears.

It was not logical, she thought, to fear this *massive cat.* He was a murderer, and in a way, had hurt a part of her, though not physically. He was the same height as her: thick legs, broad shoulders, a hard face, and round eyes. There were nicks in his long ears, and scars lining his toned, dusky, gray brown tabby fur. His green eyes seemed to pierce into her *very being*.

"Kole, leave." He murmured, studying Sparkfur. Kole gaped, open mouthed.

"But.. Father!"

"*Go.*" He snapped, and Kole dipped his head quickly, disappearing out the broken window in the door. *It's hard to believe that's the cat that killed Ryeheart.* She watched Kole leave with her eyes narrow.

"You know, I never thought the leader of some grand rogue cult would be a father," she said as casually as she could. *Keep it cool, I'm not dying tonight.*

"He thinks I'm his father, but I'm not." The leader said simply, sitting and wrapping his tail neatly around his paws. She watched him carefully, trying to figure him out.

"Right, of course," she flicked her ears, "so what's up with the vendetta against the clans?" She tipped her head to the side. He made a sort of laugh and stood up slowly, reminding her how big he was.

"I don't have to answer any questions. But you, at my mercy, will answer every question I ask you." He stalked closer to her, and she

took a step back. This was nothing like some challenge with Waspclaw where she could stand firm and growl snarky remarks. This was real.

"Yeah sure, go ahead. I asked you one, you might as well as me one." She circled around him so she wouldn't be facing the entrance to the roof any longer.

"What clan are you from?" He asked. A simple question, and she saw no harm in answering truthfully.

"DrizzleClan. It's the one in the thick forest--"

"I know," he silenced her with a flick of his tail, which had silvery hairs. She arched a brow to his quick response.

"So, you know about the clans? We're all pretty secret, so you *must* be an exile. FogClan, maybe? You're pretty stocky, and swimming is very good for building up such a strong frame." She liked to show off that she was smart. The leader glanced down at her with a bit of interest.

"Most warriors don't notice things like that." He said, turning and sitting.

"Yeah, well most warriors are a bunch of mouse-brains." She watched for his reaction, and he laughed a little.

"Yeah. *Mouse-brains.*" *FogClan cats don't use the word 'mouse-brain,' they say 'minnow-brain.' Frostheart used to say it all the time until we started making jokes about it....*

"And you hate the clans, why...? We're getting a bit off topic, and I just want to have everything figured out before you go crazy and try to kill me or something." She glanced up at him to see if she had touched a nerve, but he still seemed calm.

"They abandoned me.." He whispered. Then he looked over at her. "What did you say your name was?" His fur began to bristle, and he looked twice his original size. She swallowed and breathed in.

"I, well, I *didn't* say what my name was, but you know, I could tell

you if you told me yours..?" He took a heavy step forward, and she took a light step back.

"I grow tired of your questions. Why did DrizzleClan send you here? To destroy me? I'm sure Mintstar is still trying to prove himself worthy of his rank... That tom was as useful as a dead fox!" He growled, pacing now. His voice had picked up. Her fur pricked.

"You killed many of my clanmates." She finally spoke up, and he turned, his green eyes glimmering in the dark night.

"You probably didn't even know any of them!" He growled loudly, "that's the problem with the clans: you're a nobody unless you're the leader. Then cats know your name." He smiled lightly. "But *she* knew my name." Then his eyes narrowed. She shifted uncomfortably: he had more emotional changes than an apprentice, and made her head ache trying to keep up. "And that idiot Asterfoot killed her!" He roared, his claws unsheathed and glittering back the moonlight.

Sparkfur's tabby fur stood on end.

"Liar! Asterfoot is a good cat, and he always tries his hardest to help every cat!" She hissed. He bared his teeth.

"Did your mother teach you to speak to warriors that way?" He growled, his fur on end.

"She's dead, you fox-heart! So I'll speak to you how I want!" She spat. He leaped, and with huge paws he slammed her to the hard roof, knocking the air out of her. "You know it's rumored that you're crazy, and now I know it's true! You're insane!" She hissed lowly, but with his scarred, paler muzzle to her own nose, she knew he heard her.

The Leader tore his claws across her cheek, nearing too close for comfort to her eye. She breathed in sharply, trying to roll out of the way. His great big paws boxed her in.

"Now I know I need to kill you, no recruit of mine will go through my program and not be able to defend themselves! You even went

through warrior training and still you're stuck!" She shut her eyes tightly. *Think, think, think!* She breathed in and opened her eyes in time to see him pull his right forepaw up as he prepared to swipe it across her neck. She rolled over quickly onto her paws, and dashed forward. She hissed as his claws came down on her hind leg, and she turned to face him.

"You know, DrizzleClan may be disconnected and not as together as you'd wish, but at least they don't go around *killing* each other!" She growled. He bared his teeth.

"They killed Cherryflower!" He barked angrily.

She stood up straight, feeling a coldness run through her not caused by the leaf-bare winds that gusted across the flat rooftop.

"What did you say?" She whispered.

"Asterfoot killed Cherryflower, and she loved me! '*I did everything I could'* my tail! He had her life in his paws and he failed! He killed her!"

"No..!" She was shaking, "that's not right! Cherryflower didn't love anybody other than..." She blinked up. She saw it now. He looked just like Berryfoot: round face, round eyes, stocky frame, thick legs. "Spruceclaw."

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AN
Didn't expect to get this one done so quick, but I did. You might want to refresh your memory via Prologue if you so wish.

{headcanons : 3}

-Asterfoot is my favorite character

-Fallowtail, the she-cat who found Sedgeheart's body, has PTSD from when she found the murdered deputies body. She has really bad nightmares and won't go near the area where he was found.

-in Chapter Fifteen, Spark meets Grey and a ginger tabby expectant queen. The ginger tabby's name is Florence. Grey has three kits: a creamy ginger tabby female, a cream she-kit, and a grey tom. Their names (in order) are Flora, Lily, and Hazel. Flora is named after Florence, who is a good friend of Grey's.

-In the original outline, Sparkfur was supposed to have Ryeheart's kits, finding out she was expecting after she joined the rouges. She was supposed to give them up to Frostheart and Berryfoot and climb the ranks of the rouges, never stopping and joining the queens.

- Waspclaw is eight and a half moons older than Sparkfur: she is 16.5 moons old and he is 24.5 moons old.

-Frostheart and Ryeheart both are six moons older than Sparkfur

-The dark furred tom kit Sparkfur is 'mother' to is unofficially named Briarkit.

-Sparkfur, when she was an apprentice, was a terrible hunter and fighter and so she resorted to learning from other clans. She couldn't fight until much later on into her apprenticeship, and she still isn't very good.

-Cloudstream, the Bramble Den tom, has three kits who are all apprentices.

{nineteen}

[image]

"Spruceclaw, do you have bees in your brain? You can't just leave, you have kits!" Asterfoot pleaded, watching the massive dark tabby root through the herb supplies.

"Which of these are traveling herbs?" He growled.

"But your kits!" Asterfoot repeated, huge gold eyes begging for attention.

"Queens take care of kits, not warriors!" He snapped, looking over his shoulder for the remark, before turning back. "Asterfoot! Which of these are--"

"Stop it, you're ruining those dock leaves!" Asterfoot stepped over with light paw steps, gently picking up a small bundle of herbs. Spruceclaw held his gaze before curling his lip and grabbing the bundle.

"Go cry about it. You killed her, it's all your fault. Besides, have you seen how scrawny they are? They'd make horrible warriors!" He swallowed the contents of the traveling herbs with a bitter face. Asterfoot's fur began to rise.

"Even thin, they'll be better warriors than you!" Asterfoot growled. He could practically hear their small whines that cried for their mother, though he knew they were nowhere near, but rather in the nursery next to Lilyfur.

"Yeah right. If you're thinking of doing some weird 'I'm your dad' stuff, don't. You'll ruin them." He leaped up the three large flat stones that made up the stairway to the medical bay. Spruceclaw peeked his head back in to look down at the blue tom. "Besides. They don't need me, they'll probably die without Cherryflower. Nice going by the way, killing the girl you loved." He snarled, padding out of the camp for the very last time.

"Now this... I did *not* expect." He whispered, circling her. "I figured

you'd die under the guiding paws of Asterfoot." He laughed lightly, looking her up and down. "I do suppose you look a lot like your mother, if you ignore that bright fur." He flicked his tail, gesturing to her golden tabby fur. "What'd ya know? I'm a father again."

"*You* are not my father. You lost that right the minute you walked out and left me and Berryfoot." She straightened up, her eyes bearing into his fur.

"*-foot?* Now that's a bush-den warrior prefix if I've ever heard one! Or tell me, is he a medicine cat? I bet Asterfoot had him follow in his pawsteps or some--"

"No!" She snapped impatiently. He sounded... Happy. He wasn't *allowed* to be happy. He murdered cats for a living, he probably murdered Ryeheart... "He's the *deputy*, thanks to you. And now that I'm not under the threat of you whacking me any second, why did you kill all those cats? Sedgeheart? Ryeheart?" She tried to seem detached when she said the second name, but it didn't come out as well as she hoped. His name still rolled off her tongue with such familiarity.

"Ah, little Sedgeheart! I remember him, he was always so serious! And Ryeheart?" She looked at him intently. "Never heard of him. That's the problem with the clans being so disconnected, I didn't even know a cat that was around during my time. No, I ordered Kole out with a patrol to go and kill a single cat every once and a while. Of course he thought it was some grand mission from father--" he stopped himself, his green eyes lighting up as he paced in a circle. "Oh you'd better not tell him that you're my actual kit! He'd have your tail!"

"I don't care! Before I have *your* tail, I'll need you to stop the attack on the clans. That's my home!" She added the last sentence, hoping to guilt trip him.

"Do you honestly think I care?" He looked up at her. She tried to make sense if he was telling a joke or if he was for real. "They let Asterfoot go on being a medicine cat without punishment. That's where Cherryflower died. There's no real order-- it's all wrong! Warriors are separated, and you don't even know your own

clanmates." He spat the last words out.

"So what is this attack going to solve? That you're some *big threat*?" She waved her tail.

"Yes. And no. We don't have time to mess around, that's why we've been killing cats. Kind of; it's more of a training exercise for when we really go at your borders. We'll chip away at all four clans territory until we, the rouges, are the fair and just clan I've always wanted," He swished his tail. Sparkfur's mouth was cracked open, the only way she'd let herself show her shock.

"Call it off!" She said firmly, and he gave an amused chuckle.

"I can't just *call it off*. And why would I? I'd get what I've always dreamed of: a United clan! I'm still working out the leadership roles, but we probably wouldn't need any medicine cats...." He started rambling and she stood up briskly.

"You lack in thinking ahead!" She growled, and he curled his lip.

"How dare you disrespect me-- I could let you live and join our clan as my daughter and one of my deputies! At least, I'm planning on around five and letting them battle to the death--"

"No, you wool-brain! You simply can't have a 'united' clan that's this big!"

"Fine, we won't call ourselves a clan... How about a Gang?" She breathed out in frustration, unsheathing and sheathing her claws.

"Your name doesn't matter-- a big clan has no chance of being United. And it sucks, but that's just how it is!" His fur bristled and he stood up, his tail high and fluffed out.

"I don't have time for this.. This.. Rubbish! I've got plans to execute, and some scrawny *warrior* like you can't change a thing!" He swung a heavy paw at her, batting her feather-weight body to the ground. A chill ran up her spine as she picked her head up, catching her breath. He lumbered closer to her, his shadow casting over her.

She struggled to her paws, and he swat his paw at the side of her

head, right below her ear. She shut her eyes tightly, a high pitched nothing in her ear for a moment. She gained her senses back and set her paws firmly on the rooftop. Spruceclaw's dark pelt blended in with the night, and as he leaped forward on top of her and she felt those claws tear into her shoulder fur, she knew what she had done.

She had failed her clan.

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Guys.
One
Thousand
Reads.
THANKS SO MUCH.
So I included some art! Earlier Sparkfur mentioned that she was taught how to swim by a FogClan cat, so it's Sparkpaw trying to keep her paws dry next to her FogClan teacher, Reedpaw!

{twenty}

She could see the dawn light just barely touch the sky. Hear the battle cries of rouges preparing to dash off to war. *It's selfish to hope for StarClan to save me, when I know they should be saving whichever clan is about to be attacked.*

Sparkfur swallowed, trying to moisten her dry throat. Blood was matted in her pelt, the red liquid had clotted and no longer poured out of her like water down a river. She shakily began to stand up. The score to her shoulder stung, bleeding a little as she did such a dangerous feat of standing right after being beat by the leader of *the* rouge band. *Not as good as you thought, Sparky.*

Wincing, she limped over to where the exit was.. She took a few pawsteps back before leaping gracelessly through the slim broken glass window, tumbling to the ground on the other side. The fresh wound to her flank reopened as soon as she had done so, blood tricking down her back leg. *If Spruceclaw is determined to fight the clans, he'd have taken all of his best warriors. This place will be empty-- except for the queens. They might not know that I'm not one of them yet.. If I'm lucky.*

She forced herself back onto her paws after a few moments of rest.

Take a pawstep.

Now another.

You can do it.

Stone steps led her down to the first floor of the abandoned twoleg camp. She knew exactly which open entrance housed Gray, Gray's friend, and those kits. That kit. *The* kit she was supposed to be looking after. She used the frame of the entrance to support her, leaning heavily against it. The queens all looked worried as they talked quietly amount themselves-- there weren't any guards in the

room.

Finally one had glanced over and noticed the bloodied, battered warrior.

"Hey..! It's Spark!" She whispered. All eyes turned to her. *They know who I am.. The only way they know my name is if they know I'm from the clans.*

Sparkfur didn't know what to say. 'Sorry to intrude?' 'Please don't kill me?' 'I'm innocent?' There was a sudden hush in the room.

"Please, get us out of here. Take us back to our owners." A patched she-cat spoke up, a bright orange collar around her neck. Spark looked up, green eyes huge. They didn't want her pelt as a paw-warmer after all.

"What.. Why?" Her voice was hoarse.

"..because we never *chose* to be here." The feathery form of a huge silver tabby leaping down from the highest perch caught the warrior's eye. Arden.

This time, Spark didn't have time to freak out about how small she felt compared to the long-furred she-cat.

"Aren't you.. You know, *loyal* to the Rouges?" Sparkfur offered, trying to find the right words. She already knew the answer, it was obvious now.

"You can't be loyal to cats who force you in and murder your kits." Arden growled, turning and leaping back up to her nest, standing tall. "We're all getting out of this trash pit. We're going back to our homes, or if you'd rather, I'm sure the clans would be open to queens." She cast an icy blue glance down to Sparkfur. Spark wasn't sure-- she knew the clans would never turn down a queen. More kits means more future warriors. While most leaders would deny it they were always selfish on that aspect.

"I'm not sure... We'd have to get there without running into the rouges, and even then, the clans will be at war.

"Then we leave now. Go to the clans after the battle." Arden said simply. "Both dens of queens. And if any clan cats perish in the fight, I'm sure most cats wouldn't mind being the replacement." Sparkfur narrowed her eyes.

"You don't understand what it means to be a warrior, then!" At least, what it used to be a warrior. "Us clan cats... We're about honor. Protecting each other. Never giving up. Fighting to our last *breath.*" To be honest, she was just *describing Ryeheart.* What he had told her about what he believed in. What she now believed in. She settled down to the ground so that she was laying down. The yelling had exhausted her even more.

"Spark, you aren't looking too good...," she looked up to see the ginger tabby expecting queen from earlier.

"Of course not, Flora, her pelt is nearly clawed off!" Grey meowed dramatically from her nest on a shelf under the shadows of a desk.

"I'll be fine..!" Spark growled, getting back to her paws. The wound along her flank protested with sharp pains.

"We need to get her out of here. When the rebels come home to see her alive, they'll kill her without a doubt." Arden announced. "We'll find our own ways into the forest or to our homes." she picked up a single gray tabby kit from her nest made of moth eaten blankets. The queens nodded in agreement. *Of course*, Spark realized, A*rden is much better at rallying them.*

Gray padded up to Spark with a small smile. She had that dark colored kit in her mouth. *That dark colored kit.* Even though it was Sparkfur's ticket in, she never even named it. *How cruel*, she thought, *a name is everything. Without it.. You're nobody.*

"Here, Spark." She purred through the scruff of the young kitten's fur.

"Actually, my name is Sparkfur." The golden warrior said quietly, taking the kit and setting it down between her thin front legs.

"Oh, of course!" Grey blushed, ducking her head. "I forgot you warriors have those names.... Speaking of names, what are you naming this little guy?"

Spark looked down at the kit. Blood that had dropped down her leg was getting on his fur. She quickly licked it off. There was no way she was letting him learn of pain when he hadn't even opened his eyes.

"I'm not sure... What have you been calling him?" She looked up to Grey, who's fur grew hot.

"Well, Briar. But that's not really warrior-y, right? What about something fierce, like Eagle? Or Bear?"

"No, I think Briar will do just fine." She drew her tongue over a stinging wound on her shoulder blade shakily. The she-cats buzzed with activity, hopping out of their nests and helping each other carry kits. "Briarkit, that is, if he's joining DrizzleClan."

"Sure." Grey flicked her tortoiseshell tail. "I need to go get my own kits. I think I'll go where you go... You know, we never really got to co-mother Briarkit, so I have to." Sparkfur blinked in agreement, and the queen swiveled to go grab her own three kits.

The warrior looked down at the kit. She wasn't even sure she would be able to make it back to her clan. Her home.

And how was she even supposed to take care of a kit? She could barely take care of herself. She glanced over at the blood crusted wounds across her boney body.

"Real warriors have scars, Sparkpaw." Berrypaw growled out the last word sharply; the herb poultice being applied to his lower back had stung.

"Scars don't mean anything." The small golden tabby apprentice snapped quickly, her tail flicking. "That idiot Waspclaw should know better. Did you know they're considering him to be in the bramble den?"

"Now, now, Sparkpaw. Waspclaw is a very good warrior with traits that are honored among all cats!" Asterfoot chided, carefully spreading

cobwebs on the tom's wound.

"I bet I can get into the bramble den right out of apprenticeship!" Berry paw purred, grinning wide. He stood up when Asterfoot had finished.

"Probably not. You'll have to suck up to the other higher ups!" Sparkpaw laughed.

"Hey, it's happened before. Cloudstream got into it at his warrior ceremony!" Berrypaw stretched his hind legs in turn. Asterfoot nodded.

"It doesn't matter, just as long as you don't get hurt in training anymore." The blue-gray medicine cat meowed softly. Sparkpaw waved her thin tail.

"Wasn't planning on it." She purred. Asterfoot rolled his eyes, and she ran her tail against his shoulder as she passed him, glancing back over her shoulder. "I've gotta go! I'm going to see what the inside of that tree looks like by the river, I heard it got struck by lightning in this morning's storm!"

"Your crazy, Sparkpaw...," Berrypaw laughed gently, rubbing his head against her ear as he made way out of the medicine cat den. She shook her head and pushed past him, purring challengingly.

Sparkpaw opened her eyes, narrowing them. She was going to make it back to DrizzleClan. Help free these she-cats. Save this kit that she put in harm's way. See Berryfoot.

And if there was time... She'd hunt down Kole.

And then destroy him.

Sorry for a while since the last update, I honestly have no excuse. I should have had this done last week.

{twenty-one}

"I can hear them fighting..!" Sparkfur breathed in quickly, glancing around at the all the she-cats from where she lay; they were holding their young kits close to them to attempt to keep them warm. The screeches of battling cats filled the forest that was her home. They stood along the edge of the dense bushes, tall grass ticking her unkempt fur.

"Come on, we'll be better protected from the wind in the forest." she urged them from below eye level. A little less than half of the she-cats had decided to return to their twolegs at the beginning of the move, and the remaining queens struggled to carry all of their kits.

"But I can hear the rebells fighting!" Whispered a black she-cat again, she was laying down so that her three kits were close to her warm body.

"Then we'll stay away from the area that the sounds are coming from. There are rain shelters around the territory that can protect you from the cold and from outsiders. Come on, before the injured cats start leaving the fight!" Sparkfur meowed, getting into a sitting position. The black she-cat swallowed before standing up shakily. She picked up the smallest of her kits, a dark brown tabby.

"Alright, queens with newborn kits will go to the safest most well-hidden spot, which is not far from here. We'll all help each other!" Arden spoke from where she stood, her kit at her silver paws. Sparkfur had told her where every rain shelter was during a break in the short journey to the forest.

The queens nodded in agreement to the leader-like queen, and started back up in their journey into the woods. Grey gently nudged Sparkfur, who was still laying down.

"Come on, we're moving." She purred around the scruff of her cream colored kit.

"Yeah, I'm coming..." Spark murmured, getting to her aching paws. She slowly reached down and picked up Briarkit, who mewled pitifully. He was freezing.

"We're falling behind." Grey noted worried, looking ahead as the last cat disappeared into the bushes that bordered the woods.

"I know my way around the forest better than any of you rouges.." Spark growled, slightly agitated. Grey's ears pinned back.

"Right. Then get me to a shelter." The warrior flicked her tail and limped lightly into the bushes.

She relished in the frosty, earthy scent. She was covered up by the shade of the tree tops. The temperature seemed to drop instantly.

"You said it'd be warmer in the forest..." Grey murmured as they followed the trail of the she-cats. The sounds of fighting cats was louder, echoing through the trees. She adjusted her grip on Briarkit's scruff.

"No, I said it would protect us from the wind." She fluffed up her fur, taking soft steps.

She flicked her ears as she felt pummels in the earth: a cat was running. "Quick, get under that bush." She pushed the tortoiseshell cat under some foliage just in time as a bloodied rouge raced past them. They came out slowly, Spark with ears pricked.

Grey would have no idea how to know when there was danger, which made her that more useless to the clans. *They'll probably accept the queen's who spent time in training, and all the kits for certain. Mintstar's always made promises about growing the clan. But nobody wants to feed dead weight.*

"This way." Spark instructed, veering off west slightly.

"But the others are going straight." Grey murmured.

"That's the direction the rouge came from. I'm sure they'll figure it out." She flicked her tail. *But if Grey didn't even know the rouge was coming, how could they?*

Spark stopped suddenly.

"Here, take cover under the bracken over there with your kits." Spark gently set the dark brown kit onto the moist earth. "I have to go" she sighed and looked up at Grey.

"But Flora is carrying Hazel, and Nina is carrying little Florence!" Grey whined. Spark sighed inwardly.

"Take care of the kits you have now. I'll come back for you." She turned, looking over her shoulder. Grey was pulling Briarkit into the bracken where she had already set down the cream she-kit.

"Spark!" the tabby warrior looked over her shoulder as the tortoiseshell called her name. "Be safe."

"You too... May StarClan light your path." Grey's amber eyes softened and she nodded, trying to understand the ancient phrase whose meaning had been lost over time. *I barely even understand it... Is StarClan even watching now? Guiding my own path? ...Is Ryeheart guiding my path? Is Cherryflower?*

Sparkfur set off, planning out her next move she'd have to make. *I need to get to the battle scene. Find someone who'll know what to do-- I'm such a mess... Mintstar or Berryfoot would know what to. Maybe. Probably. Hopefully.*

She checked the air as she padded closer to the sound of fighting, but it seemed impossible for her to untangle the strong scent of the terribly familiar rogues (she could place a name to a few) with her own clanmates (which she couldn't place a name to too many).

"Spark!" Sparkfur turned her head. A chocolate she-cat, folded ears. Bray. Her thick furred pelt was all clawed up, blood dripping down her heavy frame. Spark checked her own pelt quickly. *No reopened wounds. You're okay. If she attacks you, you can take her down easy.*

"Bray!" The tabby breathed in, faking a smile. Bray always loved smiling faces and smiling herself. The quirky rebel wasn't smiling now.

"What happened to you? It must be a lie... All of it? There's no way you're one one them... Remember? You had a mate who died, and then we found you trying to hunt? Warriors can hunt, so that means what Daisy told me is all a big lie," she looked up with hopeful yellow eyes, begging for what she said to be true, "...unless... you are one of them...?"

"I'm sorry, Bray...!" Spark swallowed. She couldn't lie, not this time. Not to Bray, who never deserved such a thing.

"I-it's okay, Sparky?! Remember, we used to call you Sparky during training..? It was only just a few days ago that we last trained together so I don't see how you could forget--"

"Bray! I have to go now.. I have to go save my clan." *Why not tell her my real intentions? I'm proud to do this.*

"Please.. Don't! Don't make me fight you! If you try to go there and hurt rebels, cats who've trusted you for the past moon or so, I.. I won't let you!"

"Then they shouldn't have trusted me. My loyalty lies with my clan, and I'm fighting to keep rouges from murdering my clanmates. What are you fighting for?" She narrowed her emerald eyes challengingly, and Bray seemed to stagger. She didn't know. She was just following the orders, which were from Spruceclaw. *Spruceclaw... He doesn't deserve a warrior name.*

"I'm fighting for the Rebels! We're taking the forest so that we can have plenty of prey and space to raise our kits, so that maybe one day we can have a better safer syste--"

"No, Bray! The leader of your group, which you don't even know the name of, by the way, is trying to get revenge because he's got a petty grudge against a sickness that killed his mate!" Her voice had raised. "And I'm going to help fight this battle, for *my clan."* Bray narrowed her eyes now.

"Take one more step toward the battle field, and I'll tear you apart." She growled.

"I don't have time for this!" The warrior growled. "Just get out, Bray! Go back to whatever hole they dragged you out of. You don't belong in a bloodbath, you belong cracking jokes and being coddled by twolegs!" There was the in mistakable sound of claws unsheathing, and an angry growl as the shorter, but heavier, cat flung themselves at the slim golden tabby. For a brief moment, her face was smashed into the leaping warriors chest fur, the huge brown paws clawing at her shoulders for a grip as she landed on top. Spark breathed and kicked her hind legs into the rouge's belly fur, backing in all the strength she could and pushing her off.

She got to her white tipped paws, unsheathing her claws. Bray stood up and turned to face Sparkfur, but she drug her claws across the fold's cheek just as quick.

"Go home, Bray." Sparkfur repeated. Bray shook her head, drops of blood flinging into the surrounding green foliage.

"No! I'm here to defend *my* clan!" She growled, "and I won't stop!" She swung out fiercely. Spark knew everything: how the rouges fought, how Bray fought. *She always favors to the left, and the rouges don't know how to do any of the more complex battle moves.*

"Bray please, stop!" Desperate strikes were easily defended with simple speed advantage, one hit scraping her hind leg. "Stop it, Bray! You're bleeding everywhere from the battle, go home and get some help!" More hits and jabs came her way, but she didn't allow herself to be hit. She couldn't, she had a battle to attend. A hit to her brow, blood flowing out and blinding the warrior for a moment, making her thwack Bray as hard as she could.

She stood for a moment, blinking as many times as she could until she was no longer seeing the blood that dribbled down her face. She breathed and looked over. The chocolate she-cat was laying motionless in some weeds the sprout along the moist earth path.

"...Bray?" She came closer, touching a paw to the fold's chin, pulling her head up. It fell to the ground as soon as she let it go. She pulled her own paw close to her body, eyes huge and round.

She took a step back, then two more.

She ran.

-

AN
Okay I accidentally hit publish before I had gotten to re-read it and I *think* it's okay grammerly wise, but yeah. Longer chapter than usual, I usually aim for 1000 words, or a little above, but I overshot by about 600 words.
Oops.

Edit:
Omg I just re-read this, I'm laughing because I totally went from her saying "I'm going to go guide them" to "I'm going to find Berryfoot lol" I'm so going to have to go back and edit through this book.
OOPS AGAIN.

{twenty-two}

Warning: heavy blood warning and some dark themes going on in this chapter. Please *do not read* if you aren't comfortable with that kind of content.

Cold white flakes fell from the sky, dappling the treetops and the forest below. Sparkfur's paws thrummed against the earth as she ran, trying not to think of the pain, the bitter cold helping by numbing everything. There was no way she had killed a Bray... But she wasn't moving... *Why didn't she leave?! I don't know why it's bothering me, I didn't do anything wrong!*

The sounds of screeching cats seemed to intensify, filling her ears and pulling her out of her thoughts. A tabby cat hobbled past her, not bothering to look up, blood covering their tussled and clawed up pelt. She looked to where he was coming from: a small but steep rocky slope, bushes lining the top of the ridge. She could see the ears of cats peeking above brush as they leaped at each other, see blood spatter up and speckle the leaves of an oak.

She made out the shape of a russet tom clambering down the side of the slope toward her, blood dripping down his sides from a wound on his back.

"Spark! What are you doing out here?" He blinked with yellow eyes as he realized who she was.

"Cypressfoot? I'm here for the same reason as you." She tipped her head to the side, confused. *Why would he ask? Isn't it obvious? There's a battle going on!*

He stiffened, tipping his head up.

"Good," he nodded, relaxing, "and my name is Rust-- how many times do I have to tell you?" *I don't have time to talk about names-- he'd better get used to being called Cypressfoot again, because nobody's going to call him such a ridiculous name like Rust once this whole rogue*

thing is over. Rust. What even is that?

"I don't have time to chat, if you can't tell, there's a bloodbath going on and I need to go find Berryfoot right away."

"He's preoccupied. Cecil had him pinned up just over by the bracken bushe--"

"Why didn't you help him?! He's going to get hurt!" Sparkfur snapped, eyes wide. *I know Berryfoot can take Cecil... But he can't risk further injuries. He needs to stay fit!*

"Because Cecil seemed to have it under control...?" the russet tom raised a brow, confused. *He didn't understand me-- I'm not fighting with the rogues... But I think... I think he is!*

"You're fighting on *their* side?! The whole point of you joining them was so that you could help DrizzleClan from being attacked by them!" She could just make out the fighting cats over the ridge,

"Spark, if you are--"

"Spark*fur*. I can't believe you'd just leave your clan like that!"

"You don't understand." He growled, sheathing and unsheathing claws, pinning his ears back. "I loved Lambflower... I told her to wait for me to come back! But you know she's courting some--some... *Bramble Den* warrior?!" His teeth were bared. Sparkfur rolled her eyes, her own lip curled in a mixture of annoyance and anger.

"Oh, suck it up! If that's all it takes for you to be disloyal, then you shouldn't be a warrior in the first place!" Her fur was on end. *Lambflower is a total thorn-in-the-paw, but there's no way she's the reason for him to leave the greatest clan in all of the forest!*

"Yeah, I shouldn't be a warrior." He got down, ready to pounce at her. "That's why I'm a *rebel*." He leaped, but he had given her too much time to know he was going to attack her. She sidestepped.

"Listen, Cypresswhatever. I don't have time to toy around with you. I have somewhere to be," *I really just need permission to let in twenty or so queens and all of their kits to our clan...,* "and I've suddenly lost

interest in wether or not you live-" the air was knocked out of her as he smashed into her. She looked up at him, eyes round. He had one heavy paw square on her chest to keep her from moving, his claws unsheathed and digging further into her pelt when she struggled.

"You don't understand. Lambflower--"

"This isn't about Lambflower! You should be loyal to your clan, no matter what!"

He raised his other paw, but before he could strike her, a huge dusky ginger tabby smashed into Rust. Sparkfur sat up dazed. Copper eyes glared up at her very briefly before turning back and locking on Cypressfoot.

"Traitor!" The full, loud voice of Waspclaw. Sparkfur got to her paws and quickly made her way up the path, stopping at the top of the ridge to watch Waspclaw tear into Cypressfoot, who defended himself poorly against the harsh attacks.

Sparkfur swallowed and made her way through the shrubs that circled the small clearing. She slowly padded through the war-torn battle field, gently giving a single swipe of her tongue on a fallen DrizzleClan warrior's black furred cheek. Sparkfur tried to put a name to the black and white she-cat's round face.... *Starlingnose? No- you were on a patrol with her once, remember? It's... Starling... Starlingwing.. That's right...* Quickly, the warrior padded past her fallen comrade.

I could've stopped all this bloodshed if I would've just come back here as soon as I'd heard from that dirt-clod Otis that there was a battle going down. I shouldn't have fought with him. StarClan, if you're real, please know that... That I'm sorry.

She dodged past a pair of scrapping she-cats, wincing as she saw one's ear be ripped. She quickly maneuvered around the battle field until her eyes fell upon a deep fiery tabby pelt at the edge of the clearing. Berryfoot. He was fighting side-by-side with Frostheart, staying on the side that she was deaf in and flicking his tail against her flank when an attack was coming in. They were surrounded by rogues, but they were simply outnumbered.

"Berryfoot!" Sparkfur called out, but her voice was drowned out by the screeches of battle. "Berryfoot!" She stumbled over a dead rogue, crashing to the ground. She looked up, seeing Berryfoot be struck on his back, knocking him to the ground as well. Green eyes met green eyes. A fire surged through her; a will to survive. A will to thrive. A will to fight.

He had seen her, and she had seen him. She leaped in, wild golden fur raised and eyes narrow. She lashed her tail and took her place between Frostheart and Berryfoot.

"Sparkfur-- you're wounded!" Frostheart gasped, avoiding a paw swipe from a gray tom.

"Thank you for pointing out the obvious," Sparkfur blinked, "but.. it's not too bad."

"Sparkfur, go back to camp. Asterfoot will give you herbs and--"

"No, Berrryfoot!" the golden warrior struck her paw down, claws unsheathed, on top of the gray tom's head who had been swiping at Frostheart. "I need help protecting some queens; you told me if I could get the kits here we would take them in? Well, they're almost here, but I can't really get them to camp without--" she ducked, a blow scraping against her shoulder rather than gashing her. "Without your help!" She rushed out the last few words, ducking again for Berryfoot to cross over her as he whacked a pale ginger she-cat.

"If we three leave, we'll have to pull the rest of the warriors out. We won't leave them to die. That means the rogues will take the clearing and the area surrounding it." Berryfoot murmured. Sparkfur cracked open her mouth.

"We weren't going to win today anyway." Sparkfur murmured quietly, as she looked across the frost covered battle field. Dead and injured DrizzleClan cats were strewn about, left to bleed out and cover the field. Snow drifted slowly, landing in the dark blood and on the bodies. Berryfoot nodded slightly. He brushed his tail over Frostheart's thin tail, signaling to her. Sparkfur frowned, she didn't know that silent language Berryfoot and Frostheart seemed to share.

"DrizzleClan!" Berryfoot's call sounded, and the warriors looked up wearily. "..Retreat!" He stood atop a fallen tree, Sparkfur standing at the side of it. The summoned cats went as soon as it had been called, some going back to retrieve bodies. Rogues nipped and swiped at their legs, *mrowing* with laughter as they yipped in pain, pulling along bodies of heavy cats. Their cries of victory sounded. Sparkfur looked back, her eyes wide with pain as she watched injured cats who couldn't escape try to defend themselves from rogues who just *wouldn't stop.*

"We have to go back and help them!" She choked out, watching a dark grey DrizzleClan tom cry out and try to crawl away, scrabbling at the frozen ground. Sparkfur looked up desperately to Berryfoot, who was rooted to where he stood. "Berryfoot! They're being murdered!" She cried.

"Let's go, Sparkfur, otherwise you'll be murdered too."

"Berryfoot!" She cried his name again, ears back. She breathed in sharply, shutting her eyes tight as she heard the final cry of the dark gray tom.

"Come on, Sparkfur!" He commanded. "We have queens to protect." He head butted her gently, but firmly to the hindquarters, pushing her onward.

"But they're dying... They're our clanmates!"

"Waspclaw is coming. He'll save them."

"Waspclaw--"

"Is a lot nicer than you think. He'll get cats out."

"But what about that tom that just died? We could have gotten him out! We just watch him die!" She stumbled over a snow dusted rock.

"We couldn't have done anything, you understand? But what we can do.." He nudged her agin, and she looked over at him with wide eyes. "..What we can do is go and bring those kits back to our clan." She nodded slowly, looking back over her shoulder as the padded

away into the dense undergrowth. Waspclaw was limping away, two wounded warriors following close behind him. The rogues held their heads to the sky, cheering out into the foliage that blocked the cold day sky.

The rogues had won the day.

AN

Sorry if Sparky seems a little soft in this chapter, it's just how she's reacting to the situation.

{twenty-three}

[image]

"Where in StarClan's name is Mintstar?" Sparkfur growled, wincing as Frostheart attempted to apply some cold cobwebs to her flank wound as they walked.

"He went out to MarshClan to talk about the next step in getting rid of the rogues before the battle broke out. A MarshClan tom was found dead on our border, meaning the rogues went through our territory or something like that." Berryfoot explained, stopping to check the air. He resumed walking again, staying close to Frostheart. "You said it was a bramble bush?" He flicked his ears to his sister.

"No, just some undergrowth...." Sparkfur glanced around.

"It's over here." Frostheart spoke up softly. "Can't you smell the milk?" She tipped her head to the side with a small smile. Sparkfur sniffed the air. *Of course, I should have known...*

"Right." The golden warrior's fur grew hot and she swiftly bounded over some thick knotted tree roots that poked out of the cold ground. The bushes were piled up at the tree's side. She called out to her friend, "Grey..?" Small mews of kits answered them, and Berryfoot relaxed, having found them.

"Spark..? Who are these cats-- er-- I mean-- Spark*fur*." A broad gray face poked out. Frostheart smiled softly, pretending to have heard what the queen had said.

"This is Frostheart and my brother, Berryfoot." Sparkfur mewed. Frostheart stepped closer to the bush, but Grey noticeably tensed.

"Um, sorry-- may I?" Frostheart sheepishly pulled her ears back and looked up at the bigger cat. Grey blinked and picked up Briarkit, gently setting him down on the earth. He squirmed in protest, cold.

"Oh, Sparkfur!" Frostheart murmured, her face soft. She began licking the kit's fur in the opposite direct, trying to preserve his minimal body heat production. "Is this the kit you said you were looking after?" She purred,wrapping herself around the dark kit. He instantly squirmed closer to her.

"Well, I haven't done much of the looking after, I just merely picked it up-- I've only had it for a day or so, anyway, it's mostly--"

"Oh, please tell me you're going to raise him?" Frostheart beamed, mismatch eyes hopeful. Sparkfur blinked, kneading her paws into the ground. *I do but... I'm afraid I don't make very good mother material....*

"No, I think Grey is going to.. She's very nice, nothing like the rest of the rogues." Before Frostheart could protest, the tortoiseshell spoke up.

"Sparkfur, where are my other kits? I would like to see them." Her Amber eyes bore into the three warriors, who glanced at each other.

"Warriors are going to the other rain shelters as we speak to seek out and return kits and queens that we're to be harboring." Berryfoot dipped his head respectfully. Grey disappeared into the bushes for a moment, before returning with her own kit, a creamy colored one.

"Let's get you guys back to camp. The queens love nursing back kits to health." Berryfoot leaned down, and picked up Briarkit. There was dried blood down the side of his ginger tabby face from a few new nicks in his right ear.

"Although, I can't say they'll be as welcoming to a new cat as they will a new kit." Frostheart murmured. Sparkfur flicked her ear in agreement, and Grey looked down at her paws.

"As long as my kits can be raised safely." She murmured. "Come on, Florence..." She murmured to the creamy she-kit.

The tortoiseshell queen gently picked up her kit, and Sparkfur

glanced over to see Berryfoot with the small tom kit.

"I'm going to help the other group." Sparkfur murmured, turning. Frostleap stepped in front of the weary golden tabby.

"No way! You're coming back to camp-- there are just enough warriors to protect them, you on the other hand need to be treated. This cut on your flank is fairly deep..." She touched her white muzzle to where a heap of cobwebs were on the skin-and-bones she-cat. Sparkfur flinched away at the contact, twitching her ears.

"I suppose you're right...," she took off at a brisk pace, limping on her hind right leg.

A blur of red tabby suddenly rushed to catch up to her, and she turned her head to see Berryfoot padding along side her, having passed Briarkit off to Frostheart.

"Hey, Sparkfur..." he began, his green eyes sparking an unreadable expression. The golden tabby turned to look at her brother. "You know, a lot has changed since you last were here." He twitched his tail, taking a large step so he didn't step on a bramble tendril.

"Yes, I'm sure the clan has changed *so much* in two and a half moons, has it been?" Sparkfur *mrrowed* in amusement. Berryfoot nodded, all serious. "I'm sure I'll be able to figure out if something has changed." She added.

"I'm sure you will figure it out, I'm just not sure if you'll be okay with it..." He dropped back to pad next to Frostheart. Sparkfur narrowed her eyes and picked up her pace.

"I'm sure there's nothing *that* different." They neared the entrance, a wave of home sickness crashing down on the scrawny she-cat. She could see her little den just outside the camp walls, it even still smelled faintly of her and strongly of Frostheart. She cringed. It *also* smelled like Berryfoot. And something else... Her eyes widened. She quickly took long strides so that her head poked in.

A dark gray she-cat lay in Frostheart's best, five kits nestled at her

side. She picked up her head, drearily.

"You're... Sparkfur? Right?" She murmured, sleep lacing her voice. Sparkfur curled her lip, her fur fluffing up.

"What is a *queen* doing in my den?" She whirled, growling. Berryfoot was padding up, Frostheart and Grey just behind him.

"She's taking care of my kits." Berryfoot growled, suddenly seeming to be able to defend himself.

Sparkfur breathed in deeply.

"I leave for two moons and you knock up some random she-cat?!" She hissed quietly, her eyes darting to look inside the den.

"No, you wool-brain!" Berryfoot growled. Frostheart took a step forward, gently setting Briarkit down.

"They're *our* kits. Berryfoot and I." She spoke, her eyes narrowed. Sparkfur blinked.

This wasn't what she expected.

AN

Sorry it's been so long. But I think this was worth it. Maybe.

{twenty-four}

[image]

"I can't believe you didn't tell me. You had just seen me and you didn't tell me then?" Sparkfur glanced over at the three kits that clung close to Frostheart. Gray was at the far edge of the den, nursing her three kits plus Briarkit. DrizzleClan had brought back every rogue queen and their kits safely, Gray was being extra gently with the two kits who had been separated from her. The den was too crowded for Sparkfur's taste, but the outside forest was bitter cold, with a thick layer of snow blanketing the woods.

"We planned on it, honestly!" Berryfoot assured. "We wanted to surprise you, when you did come back." Sparkfur shook her ears lightly. Gray's kits were mewing loudly, their ears were pricked and eyes wide open, trying to mew their first words.

"Yeah? What would you do if it took me another few moons to get back?" She drew her tongue over the wounds covered in poultices, and Frostheart immediately hissed for her to not touch. It had been two days since the battle, and the healing claw marks were itchy.

"We knew you'd be back soon. You just had to." Berryfoot purred, stepping closer to her where she lay. Sparkfur looked up at him, her eyes narrow. She hadn't curled up against her brother since she was an apprentice.

"Also, we wanted your help naming them." Frostheart added with a purr. Sparkfur's ears pricked.

"Hm? Oh.. Sure." She was vaguely aware that the naming of kits was very sacred, and to be asked to help was an honor in itself. There were three kits: one was a fiery ginger tabby with high white markings, another was mostly white with a ginger tabby tail. The last was a pale creamy ginger-brown, white belly fur and muzzle.

"How about Emberkit? For the ginger tom?" She looked to Frostheart, looking for the slightest hint of approval. The white

queen purred brightly.

"Oh yes!" She nodded, "It'll go nicely with Hazelkit." She gently drew her tongue over a smaller pale ginger tabby she-kit. "I've always loved that name on lighter colored cats." Berryfoot twitched his ears happily.

"What about the last one?" The tom mewed, wrapping his tail around his large paws.

Frostheart twitched her ears thoughtfully.

"Her tail is as red as a squirrel," Grey noted from her nest. Frostheart's face lit up.

"Squirrelkit!" She blurted. The white kit was larger than the others, with a thick furred red tabby tail, a splotch in between her ears.

Sparkfur opened her mouth to say something, when he crunching of snow caught her attention. She turned her head, looking out the small gap in the stone den. She could see larger paws of a full grown dark gray cat, along side a small set of lighter gray paws. The young cat poked their head in, a tortoiseshell kit swinging in their jaws. *That's the kit belonged to that queen who helped nurse Frostheart's kits while she was in battle... That means that the other cat is probably--*

Sparkfur was pushed out of her best as the light gray apprentice shoved his way into the den, the dark gray cat following with a dark gray kit in her jaws.

"Cinderstep!" Frostheart purred, her mismatch eyes wide with surprise.

"Sorry to make it even more cramped in here--" the dark gray queen murmured, setting her kit down. He appeared around a moon old, his eyes wide open and ears pulled back sassily from the cold.

"Frostheart, Asterfoot's requested that you help. A border patrol just got back, they're pretty badly busted up. We're already stretched thin with all the battle injuries, we need your help." Sparkfur looked at her paws. Of course.. This was the Asterfoot's apprentice. The cat

she was supposed to help pick with the blue-gray tom the day that Ryeheart had--

"Yeah, I'll be right there." Frostheart nodded, standing up carefully. The newly named kits cried out angrily, but just as quickly as their mother stood, Cinderstep took her place in the soft moss, pulling her own two kits close.

"I should come as well..." Berryfoot dipped his head to Cinderstep and Grey, his eyes resting on Sparkfur. He looked at her expectantly as if asking if she were coming as well.

"Of course, flea-brain." She flicked an ear. He gave a side smile, filing out of the den after the apprentice and his mate. Sparkfur cast a glance back into her den. Briarkit was sleeping soundly next to Grey and his foster siblings, and Frostheart's kits were snuggling down into Cinderstep's smoky colored fur.

She turned, stepping into Berryfoot's paw steps so she didn't tramp through the snow, wincing at a particular flank wound that sent an angry shock through her. *If we can do this right.. Fight off the rogues... They won't have to know what it's like to fight like this, to know death, to hurt...* She ducked her head against the cold winds that began to whistle through the snowy woods.

The camp entrance was only a few tail lengths from her personal stone den, a dark tabby she-cat was currently on guard. Her dusky brown fur was fluffed against the cold, with a mass of cobwebs plastered to her shoulder and ribcage. Sparkfur gave the freezing cat a small nod of sympathy, but the she-cat didn't return it. *It's not like I'm stuck out guarding the entrance in the cold.* She quickly ducked in through the bushes, she could hear Berryfoot's low mews as he spoke. She curled her lip as she recognized Waspclaw's voice as well.

She pulled through the thick tunnel of foliage, blinking into the brightness of the snow covered camp. Paw prints were tracked all throughout the fluffy white snow, the edges of camp just barely showing signs of grass where the high branches of trees outside the bush walls had protected the ground below.

"I'm happy you've had a family, but you need to keep your deputy life and your whatever life separate." Waspclaw was growling. Berryfoot stood out like a fiery smudge against the white background, his tabby fur on end.

"I am..!" he half growled. She could see guilt glimmer across his green eyes. *For once Waspclaw is right... Berryfoot needs to be faithful to his position.*

"It's just one mistake, Waspclaw. No cat is perfect-- deputy or not. It's not like he ate all the prey." Sparkfur strode over, tail high. Waspclaw narrowed his eyes.

"There isn't any prey in the first place!" the dull ginger tom bristled. Sparkfur twitched an ear. *Touché.*

"Hey, when's Mintstar coming back? I'm she he's planned something on this *perfectly* timed hiatus." Sparkfur changed the subject. *Berryfoot's failure to perform isn't really my business.*

"I sent an apprentice out to MarshClan territory to retrieve him yesterday night. They should be back soon." Berryfoot murmured. Waspclaw seemed to have relaxed with the change of topic.

"Maplepaw is a very competent apprentice, he's Cloudstream and Bramble.. No Owlheart's kit, right?" Waspclaw looked over to Sparkfur, checking his facts. She flicked her tail.

"I guess. I've been away for three moons, I couldn't tell you." She licked a paw, dragging it over a numb ear. He lashed his tail, frustrated.

"I hate how disconnected the clan is... When I become leader I'll change that."

"Who says *you'll* be leader? You'd have to beat Berryfoot in a fight."

"I know how it works, Sparkfur." He growled. "I'm going to see the patrol that just came back. Do whatever you want, it's not like I can stop you." He padded off to the medicine den. Sparkfur's eyes flashed. *For a moment there, I thought he could actually be bearable*

enough to have a conversation with... She padded after him, down into the underground cave-like den. She remembered when there had once been empty nests, but now as she looked down into the den from one of the stone platform steps, most every moss best was occupied.

"Sparkfur! Don't tell me your down here for wounds, too..." Asterfoot gazed up at her, herbs in his jaws. Her sharp green gaze softened. He looked so tired, his blue-gray fur mussed in a few spots, his tail half dropping. Her eyes searched for Waspclaw, spotting him and Berryfoot hunched over a badly wounded black she-cat, Amberleaf quickly applying herbs.

"No..." She murmured softly, slinking down into the den carefully. "Do you need any help with that?" She nodded to the wad of comfrey in his jaws. He purred lightly.

"There's not much you could do, but you can accompany me. Meet some patients. They love visitors." He directed her to one of the two branches off dens from the large main area. It took a moment for her eyes to adjust to the darkness, but she was met with a clearing scattered with cats in nests. Some had visitors, a few others were unlucky on that aspect.

A honey golden tabby she-cat lay in a moss nest, a few tail lengths separating her from another nest, occupied by a dark tortoiseshell. Her amber eyes were concentrated on the darker colored she-cat, who was purring softly to a tom visiting her.

"Hello." Sparkfur greeted the golden tabby, who lifted her head.

"Oh, hi Asterfoot... Who's this?" She flicked an ear in reference to Sparkfur. The older blue-gray tom set his pile of herbs down, sitting down next to his patient.

"Honeylight, this is Sparkfur."

"Oh! I've heard about you! You're the one who went in to spy!" Sparkfur dipped her head politely. She watched as Asterfoot gently turned Honeylight, revealing a nasty cut from her back leg to all the way across her flank.

"That looks bad..!" Sparkfur mewed, hoping she didn't sound too fake. Sympathetic words never came as easily to her, they always tumbled out of her mouth awkwardly. Honeylight nodded, wincing as Asterfoot began undressing the wound. Sparkfur twitched her nose, her eyes dropping down to the wound.

"It's not *that* bad. If you add all your wounds together, they'd probably be worse than this one!" Honeylight held her breathe as Asterfoot dabbed damp moss against the wound. Sparkfur shook her ears dramatically

"I doubt it. I got almost all of these from the leader of the rogues." Asterfoot tipped his head, interested.

"Are you sure you should be telling this to us?" Asterfoot murmured. Sparkfur flicked her tail.

"Of course. If I go out now, at least someone will be able to tell Mintstar my story." The amber eyes of the she-car lit up. Sparkfur had actually already told Berryfoot, Waspclaw, and a few other bramble den warriors every detail the moment she returned to camp, but for this injured she-cat... Sparkfur wasn't sure why, but she felt a need to make her happy.

"So, what happened?" Honeylight insisted, Asterfoot returning to his work.

"The leader of the rogues lived in a huge stone den-- as tall as an oak!" Sparkfur stretched up on her hind legs to demonstrate. A young white tom in the nest next to them turned to watch, his father turning as well.

She turned her attention back to Honeylight. "The leader of the rogues, his name was Spruceclaw! He used to be a clan cat, but he's holding a grudge for something no cat could have stopped." Asterfoot tensed, looking at his paws. She continued. "So I confronted him." *Kind of. I was forced to meet him.* "And he told me he was going to attack DrizzleClan! I refused to let that happen, so naturally I fought him," *Lying is just too easy in storytelling.*

"Did you beat him?!" The white apprentice yipped. He has dark

smoky gray splotches on his spine and foreleg.

"You can't win every battle." Sparkfur sighed. She began running her tongue over the most pesky of the wounds along her flank.

"That's enough excitement for today." Asterfoot murmured gently, moving away from Honeylight. The amber eyed she-cat closed her eyes, nodding in agreement. The apprentice started whining, but Sparkfur didn't catch what it was about. There was commotion beginning to sound in the main den. Sparkfur stood up without a goodbye, dashing out. A dark golden brown tabby tom lay, flanks heaving as he caught is breath. Sparkfur edged closer.

He gasped for air, his fur wind whipped and cold, but his skin was hot. *He was just running...*

His eyes locked onto Sparkfur, words escaping his mouth that was hungry for oxygen. Her eyes widened.

"S...." He breathed in again, "Sparkfur!"

AN

I'm so sorry for erratic updates. I hope his makes up for it though, it's twice as long as usual. ;;;-) also a *really* quickly colored Sparkfur and Briarkit.

{headcanons : 4}

-Bray wasn't originally going to die... It just happened that way oops....

- I am planning on doing a one-shot from Asterfoot's perspective before Cherryflower and Spruceclaw were even mates.

-I also might do one of Waspclaw when he was an apprentice? Not sure on that one, though.

-Lambflower is such a player lmao she just wants a powerful mate.

-Sparkfur has white paws

-Berryfoot's paws are paler than the rest of his pelt, which I did mention when introducing Spruceclaw in the prologue.

-I didn't think this was going to be more than twenty chapters, but here we are with 24. I think it'll be about 30 chapters when it's done? We're almost done...! I'm kINDA sure of what I want to do next. It'll be in the same world AU thing as *Spark*. (probably)

{twenty-five}

[image]

"Give him some room!" Amberleaf hissed, shoving Sparkfur with a broad gray shoulder. He had said her name. And she had never even met him. *He must have been sent to get me.. But from where..? He smells of DrizzleClan oaks, but also faintly of.. MarshClan.*

The young tabby tom glanced up gratefully, still gasping for breath. After a moment, the broad gray medicine cat nodded.

"He'll be fine," she murmured, padding toward the herb storage.

"This is Maplepaw, isn't it?" Sparkfur turned to Waspclaw, who was padding up with a confused face.

"Yes! Which means that Mintstar must be back...!" Waspclaw dashed up the giant stone platform steps out the den, Sparkfur rushing after him, Berryfoot on her tail.

The gray feathery tom was in the middle of the camp, his tail high and piercing green eyes sweeping over cold, empty clearing. As soon as his eyes landed on his deputies and Sparkfur, he started across the snow toward them.

"I missed the battle, I'm so sorry... I need to know everything." He dipped his head to Sparkfur. "Nice to see you." He murmured. She gave a slight nod, still remembering when Ryeheart had told her that Mintstar had had feelings for her. *Mintstar had misguided thoughts about me; liking me like that. He's probably forgotten all about it by now, anyway.*

"Of course. The Bramble Den has many cats recovering in it, though. We'll meet in your den." Waspclaw nodded toward the large tree, snow stuck to every nook.

While the Bramble Den was right at the base of the oak, there was an abandoned hollowed out squirrel nest. She hauled herself up the

side of the tree, slick with snow. She had never actually been in the leaders den, and her eyes took in every detail as she waited for the other cats to enter first. The entrance was only big enough for one cat to enter at a time, claw marks showing where it had been made wider for a cat to fit.

With her much scrawnier frame, she fit right through to the inside of the den. It was on the small size, just big enough for the four of them to fit comfortably, Mintstar taking his place in his overly mossy nest. A thin layer of moss lined the every inch of flooring of the den.

"I didn't know there had been a battle until we were half-way into our territory, where Maplepaw and I ran into Sandwhisker. She told about the battle, and that you came back. We ran all the way to camp, and I sent Maplepaw to look for you in the medicine cat den," the feathery gray tom explained.

"Spruceclaw is leading the rogues." Sparkfur murmured. Berryfoot looked to his paws, embarrassed for some reason. *It's not like we're the ones who've done all of this terrible stuff... But since he's our father, we'll probably get some blame for it.*

"I don't see why he would do such a thing... He loved DrizzleClan, he was a Bramble Den warrior...," Mintstar wondered aloud.

"Why's he doing it?" Waspclaw turned his broad head to look at Sparkfur.

"He wants a United clan. A whole new system." She thought back to three nights ago, when Spruceclaw had shredded her and left her to bleed.

"Wouldn't we all?" Waspclaw murmured. Mintstar tipped his chin up, giving the large deputy and long look.

"The rogues took the edge of forest, we couldn't hold them off while also getting all the queens to safety-- many of the queens were forced into the Rebel ranks." Berryfoot changed the subject slightly, back on track to the problem at paw.

"So we need to regain our territory." Waspclaw thought aloud.

"We need to take down the rogues. All of their warriors just follow orders from higher-ups. They're just followers, that's all. I bet that in the end, some of them will even be willing to join DrizzleClan--"

"Let's not get ahead of ourselves, Sparkfur...," Berryfoot cut her off. She glared at him, but kept her mouth shut.

"We'll need help from the other clans. MarshClan is closest, and we need to end this, before it's too late." Mintstar rose from his nest. "Sparkfur, grab a quick cat to send a message to Rosestar, that there is a way to stop the rogues; we need extra claws though." Sparkfur nodded turning and stepping out into the cold.

This is it. I'm going to avenge Ryeheart. The time is now-- and I'm ready.

AN

SparkRye or BerryFrost? Which is your favorite?!

Also, sorry not much really happened in this chap lol

{twenty-six}

"And our kits will be protected while you're away in battle?" Grey mewed nervously, pulling her tail closer to her three kits, which were testing their ability to stand, their kit-blue eyes wide with amazement.

"Of course. Cinderstep is a trained warrior after all." Frostheart assured from where she was nuzzling her kits in a goodbye. The dark gray queen was already in Frostheart's nest, feeding the three kits as well as her own tortoiseshell she-kit and gray tom kit. Berryfoot has his tail rested against his mate's flank, also looking over his kits proudly.

Sparkfur glanced around impatiently. She didn't like going into battle too much-- probably because her first real battle was against Spruceclaw, who shredded her. Her wounds had healed without complications (Asterfoot had spoken about how StarClan must be real for that to have happened.) Frostheart had said that most of the wounds the golden tabby received from Spruceclaw would leave noticeable scars, though. Berryfoot said it was a sign of a real warrior. *Scars don't make a warrior. Ryeheart didn't have any scars.*

"Ready to go?" Sparkfur blurted. Frostheart didn't look up, Sparkfur sighing, frustrated with herself for being on the wrong side of the half-deaf she-cat. Berryfoot gently touched his nose to the white she-cat's shoulder.

"Why do you even have to leave your kits, Frostheart?" Grey asked, amber eyes glittering with curiosity. Sparkfur noticed Briarkit's paw twitch in his sleep.

"Waspclaw convinced Mintstar that I should have to." She looked to her paws. She ran her tongue over Hazelkit's ears one last time before standing up. Sparkfur's pelt grew hot. She hadn't thought to ask Frostheart why she was even leaving her kits-- she just assumed the she-cat had wanted to defend her clan....

"We should hurry. Waspclaw and Mintstar have probably finished briefing the MarshClan cats." Berryfoot murmured, his emerald eyes flashing as they looked over to his sister in the dim light.

"You'll see them again soon," Sparkfur mewed to Frostheart as the golden tabby padded out of the cramped den to the chilly outside. The snow had formed an thin, hard frozen layer over the top, making it easy to walk over.

It had only taken a day and a half for a cat to get to MarshClan territory and back with the MarshClan warriors. Sparkfur hadn't even gotten a chance to observe them, the second they stepped paw into camp, Berryfoot had pushed her into the rogue Queen den (the second Elder's den that hadn't been used in moons) to explain the situation. Mintstar had agreed to let them stay, as long as their kits were raised as DrizzleClan warriors. No cat had protested, after all, *not even Waspclaw would leave a kit and its mother out in the cold to go back to the rogues.*

Sparkfur stepped into the camp, which was just a few fox lengths from her den, looking around. Warriors were everywhere, sharpening their claws and saying goodbye to their mates and kits. The only cats staying behind were young apprentices, queens, kits, and the badly injured warriors. *They're all willing to go to battle for their Clan's future.* She shifted, looking at the DrizzleClan warriors.

Lambflower, was whispering something to Waspclaw. The dusky ginger tom murmured something back with a glare, and she padded off with perfect white fur fluffed up, her ears drawn back angrily.

Honeylight was at the edge of the medicine den, begging Amberleaf to let her fight. The broad gray medicine cat growled something inaudible from where Sparkfur stood, *probably something about how injured she is.*

Cloudstream was laying by the Bramble Den, nursing deep wounds, speaking quietly to his mate and (presumably) his kits. *That's Maplepaw, the apprentice who retrieved Mintstar. Cloudstream must not be able to fight.... But he still has to watch his family leave for battle.* She stiffened. No cat seemed to fear the pain and possible death

that was waiting for them.

The MarshClan Warriors were looking uneasy, although their eyes were set in a determined way. *They know this isn't* just *DrizzleClan's fight-- it's all of ours. FogClan and HailClan should be fighting as well-- but we don't have time to get everyone together. Perhaps Spruceclaw is right on that aspect, that the cats and the clans aren't connected.*

Sparkfur tensed, eyes wide, as she noticed a cat padding foreword. They looked very similar to Ryeheart, with pale cream tabby fur and a broad body. Their eyes were however green rather than gold, and as they came closer, she noticed graying hairs around their muzzle.

"You must be Sparkfur."

"And you must be..," Sparkfur searched for the name. Ryeheart had mentioned his parents at one point. "Thrushcall." His pale green eyes lit up with surprise.

"He mentioned me..?" The tom murmured. Sparkfur flicked an ear as a yes. *Why* wouldn't *he mention who his parents were? How stupid a question....* "I know you were there that night. I know you saw who did it." Sparkfur nodded. *Ryeheart. His name was Ryeheart.* "I need you to do it. Kill them." Thrushcall murmured. Her eyes lit up with surprise, but his eyes were hard and serious. "I would do it myself, but I'm not as strong as I used to be. You went to the Rouge Camp and back. You're strong... You can do it." Sparkfur swallowed, her fur hot.

"I... I'm not sure--"

"You have to. For him. He was my only son.. He has two sisters." He purred gently. Sparkfur looked around, uncomfortably. Mintstar and Rosestar were gathering the warriors together. The MarshClan leader had a pale ginger tabby coat, glimmering with hints of a brighter ginger in the dim Leaf-Bare sunlight.

"I know, I just... I wasn't sure of what I was going to do when I found the cat who killed Ryeheart." Sparkfur kneaded her paws into the snow. Thrushcall had also noticed the warriors gathering, and

had started to pull away.

"Think about it. It won't take long for you to know it's the right thing to do." He turned, going to take his place but other Cedar Den warriors. Sparkfur was rooted in her paw steps. *When I* had *ran into Kole, I hid. I'm not sure if I can kill him. I know I want to-- but I don't know if it's really what Ryeheart would want.* A cat brushed up against her, and she turned to see Asterfoot. His round yellow eyes were soft.

"You take care of yourself, okay? Stay close to Berryfoot and Frostheart. Waspclaw is going after Spruceclaw, so you don't bother trying to fight him again, you hear me?" The small blue-gray medicine cat drew his tongue over her messy fur. She shook her whiskers in the defiant manner that she always did. He seemed to force out a choked purr. "I could never get your fur to stay down...," he murmured. Sparkfur glanced around. Every cat was paying attention to Mintstar as he spoke about loyalty and the honor that came in battle. She gently drew her tongue across Asterfoot's ear.

"Don't worry, I'll be fine. Look out for Briarkit, alright? The battle should be over before Moonrise." The white pelt of Frostheart came into the corner of her eye, the she-cat padding up on her other side.

"I'm nervous." Frostheart murmured. Asterfoot sat down, and Sparkfur turned to her friend.

"Don't be. You have a family to fight for." Frostheart tipped her head to the side.

"So do you." She murmured.

Mintstar raised his tail, Waspclaw letting out a battle screech and tearing away out the camp entrance, over half of the warriors following. The others would come in soon after as reinforcements. Sparkfur breathed in. Her eyes met Thrushcall's as the cream tom pelted away.

"Let's go." Sparkfur pressed her flank against Asterfoot as she passed slowly, quickening her pace as his fur, smelling of various

herbs, was no longer against hers. Frostheart, as usual, struggled to keep pace with the much taller warrior. The two caught up to Berryfoot, who was at the flank of the battle patrol.

"Stay with me." Berryfoot reminded, though his gaze was fixed on Sparkfur. *I wonder if he's curious about seeing Spruceclaw.* They kept pace with the rest of the patrol, and after the lengthy run they slowed as they neared the tall grassed meadow edge of the territory where Sedgeheart's body had been found. The rogues were bound to be swarming the land, as they had been daring enough to claim that part of the territory as well as the ravine battle-ground.

Berryfoot's tabby tail raised as they got even closer, the trees thinning. The warriors had all spread out, crouching and slowly creeping low to the ground. *The rebels had done poorly fighting in a cramped forest space. In the open of the meadow, they should fight with all of the skills they were taught in recruit training.* The began circling the area, Sparkfur staying right at Frostheart's flank.

A loud screech sounded, Mintstar and Rosestar both standing side by side atop a boulder that sloped up from the ground. The warriors popped up from the grass, yowling. Sparkfur poked her head up just in time to see shocked rogues in the middle of battle training, turning with teeth bared and fur on end.

Sparkfur recognized Cecil, the broad gray tabby tom head of Recruit Training. He raised his tail in a commanding motion, his rebels immediately tearing off toward the Clan cats, already waiting with open claws. Sparkfur shrunk back toward Berryfoot, eyes wide as she heard the slam of bodies and see the blood slice into the air.

We just ran to our deaths.

AN

I'm also working on a one-shot sooo surprise lol.

{twenty-seven}

[image]

"Stay close!" She could just make out Frostheart's bright pelt behind a tangle of cats that separated Sparkfur from Berryfoot and her friend.

"Sparkfur!" Frostheart's desperate call. Sparkfur ducked as a cat was tossed into the air a tail length away.

"I'm coming!" Sparkfur grit her teeth, dodging around the brawling pair that kept her from her friends. She avoided a sharp snap of rogue jaws, and leaped over a mound of blood spattered snow.

"Hey, Sparky..." Sparkfur just barely had time to glance over to who called her before she had her legs swept from under her. Dazed, she blinked up. A giant strangely calico tom lumbered closer to her, a scar from his chin to his mouth. *Fang.*

"To what do I owe the pleasure..?" Sparkfur growled, scrambling to her paws, lowering to a defensive position. Her fur was standing on end, her head ducked low. Probably not as scary as she thought she looked, especially compared to the huge rogue.

"I heard you killed Bray." The warrior swallowed, curling her lip.

"What does it matter to you?" Sparkfur smirked, though the pain still ached in her chest. She always hated faking her feelings for the sake of looking strong. She had no idea how other warriors did it.

"She was nice to you." Fang growled, circling her. Sparkfur spun with him so her back was never to the tom.

"She was a rogue." Fang snarled and rushed forward, teeth bared. The she-cat stepped to the side awkwardly, the calico snapping at thin air. He brought his front paw up, Sparkfur dreading a head-ache that would come from a blow like that, and so she barreled right into him. They tumbled over the grassy hillside, separating as

they toppled over the terrain. The warrior blinked open her eyes blearily, shakily getting to her paws, snow had clotted on her fur. A thick pain buzzed at her hind right leg, but it was easy to ignore with the numbing cold biting at her limbs. Fang was climbing to his huge paws at the same time as well. She blinked as she saw a shadow-like figure slink down the slope toward them. Kole.

"Nice of you to join me." Fang growled to his fellow rebel. Kole twitched an ear.

"Run along, Fang. Go tear into some fuzzy apprentice." Kole murmured. Fang narrowed his eyes, baffled. "I've got this one." Kole meowed with much more authority. The calico tom limped toward the fray. Sparkfur flicked her tail.

"Fancy meeting you here." She looked him up and down for any sign of weakness. A skill she had picked up knowing she was never safe for moons in a rogue camp.

"Cut the small talk. I'm sure Father won't be happy with you surviving. You're not even fully healed yet, Sparky, he'll make quick work of you!" He began inching forward from where he stood a few fox lengths away. Sparkfur began inching back.

"Why does he have to kill me? Can't you do anything yourself?" Sparkfur sneered. He stopped for a moment, eyes narrowing. *Weakness found.*

He snarled something under his breath, bounding forward. Sparkfur unsheathed her claws quickly, crouching down. *Thrushcall asked you to do it... Do it for Ryeheart.* Their eyes locked. There was a scar down his dark tabby face from that night, a wound she had given him. She shifted on her paws, a scar on the back of her leg given to her by the tom on that same night. His dark tabby rippled as he ran, and she watched his muscles bunch as he didn't even break stride to leap at her. It would be simple to really kill him-- all she's have to do was strike her claws up in between his front paws that were preparing to come down on her. *What Thrushclaw wants and what Ryeheart wanted are two very different things.*

The tabby warrior brought her paws up, jaws open to catch the

rogue that leaped down at her. Her claws scratched on his shoulders, which seemed like she had made the right move, however she had misjudged how heavy he would actually be, and the wind was knocked right out of her as he landed.

He didn't have quite a good hold on her yet, still trying to get a grip after crashing down on her, and she used this to her advantage. She bit down on one short foreleg of his, giving her enough leverage to squirm free. Blood welled up along his shoulder wounds and flecked the white snow at his paws. Sparkfur flicked her thin tail.

"Fighting so sloppily, you think Spruceclaw would be so proud?" Kole growled and kept at her again without warning, biting down on her scruff. Sparkfur's eyes went round, images of The Night flashing before her eyes.

Ryeheart cried out in pain, but she couldn't see him. She wrestled her way out from a cat attacking her, sliding her claws down the rogue's muzzle, and bolted over to the dark charcoal tom, who was biting down on Ryeheart's scruff.

He's going to kill me just like he killed Ryeheart. I won't let that happen!

She twisted around in his grasp, pain seeding through her pelt as he bit down. It felt like moons had passed before she something smashed into Kole. She smacked onto the ground, her fall not being softened by the frozen snow. She blinked, snow crystals blurring her vision. The blurry shape of a fawn tabby tom, broad and big, was fighting the dark tabby. She refused to let herself think for a second that t was Ryeheart, she knew better. *Thrushcall.*

"Thrushcall!" Sparkfur half growled. He broke apart from Kole, quickly bounding over to her.

"C'mon, Sparkfur. Get back to Berryfoot. Find the cat." Sparkfur's eyes locked with Kole's green eyes, which were glittering with malice.

"Hey Sparky.." Kole called, his tail lashing behind him. "You know, I'm not one to forget a face. And this face looks an awful lot like.."

He raised a brow, his teeth glistening. "..what was his name..? I remember you saying it. Yelling it. Crying it." Sparkfur swallowed, getting to her paws.

"Ryeheart...?" She whispered, her eyes dropping down to his body. Blood coated his thick feathery neck fur, and his bright, always intriguing amber eyes were now clouded and dull. Her voice cracked out, tears peeking, and she breathed out his name, "Ryeheart...!"

"Ah! That's right!" Kole's eyes turned from Sparkfur to Thrushcall, whose face was hard with confusion, mixed with sudden realization, and a touch of something else. "Ryeheart."

"You don't get to say his name!" Sparkfur cried out, her fur bristling. Thrushcall leaped forward.

"This is for my son!" Those were the only words he was able to get out, Kole wasn't able to resist the temptation of striking his claws down the entire of Thrushcall's pale throat. Sparkfur stumbled forward through the snow, unable to breathe. Warm blood was flooding out of the neck wound, Thrushcall choking on his own blood. His eyes were flicking back and forth before finally landing on Sparkfur.

"Say hi to Ryeheart for me...," Kole whispered, glancing up challengingly to Sparkfur. Her eyes were cold, her face unreadable. "Right then. However much I'd love to--" Sparkfur didn't let him finish his sentence. She raised her paw, bringing it down so fast he didn't even have time to react, straight across those malicious green eyes. He yowled so loud, so, so loud....

And Sparkfur didn't feel any regret.

AN

I meant to have this done this weekend but I just could not keep my thoughts straight oops. I was screwing around on procreate and made the drawing up top; nothing special, just a really quick thing.

{twenty-eight}

[image]

Sparkfur tried to block out the sound of Kole writhing around in the snow, yowling in pain, painting it red with blood. She instead, turned her attention to Thrushcall, ducking her head so that she could groom his fur gently.

"Ryeheart believed in StarClan with all of his heart and soul.. I hope you did too, so that you can join him there." She whispered, glancing up as she heard a cat call her name.

A large, familiar, dull ginger tom with dark tabby stripes. There was a cut under his eye, and his ear had a new, bleeding nick.

"Waspclaw.." She murmured. He nodded in understanding as he saw the trembling form of Kole.

"I've got a scent trail on Spruceclaw.. I know Berryfoot wants you to stay safe, but honestly, I know you want to see him again." Sparkfur glanced down at Thrushcall's body one last time. He, like Ryeheart, wouldn't get a special burial.

"No tricks?" She narrowed her eyes, doubtfully. He scoffed.

"No tricks. We've got to go *now.* I've waisted enough time to find you." Sparkfur limped after him, the injury from falling down the hillside still aching in her hind leg.

She looked back over her shoulder for a quick look at Kole, regretting it. Blood was covering one half of his face, dripping down his muzzle. He had stopped squirming, and his left eye, which she hadn't raked her claws over, was narrowed with a chilling hate. She quickened her pace, even though the tom wouldn't stand a chance against her with the recently acquired injury.

"How do you know Spruceclaw's scent, anyway?" Sparkfur murmured, trying to not let her mind wonder to images of Kole.

"Spruceclaw was my mentor for my first two moons as an apprentice. Then you were born, and he left." Waspclaw glanced over at her, his face unreadable.

"It's not like it was my fault. It was his own choice to leave." She flicked her tail. Waspclaw checked the air, then continued along the snow covered meadow. A thin forest was just up ahead, and Sparkfur suspected it must be where Spruceclaw was. The broad tom swallowed, his ears flicking back.

"I bet you didn't think that when you were younger..?" He looked over at her with copper eyes. She shrugged.

"I suppose some cats might have blamed it on themselves... But Asterfoot told me every second that story got brought up it wasn't our fault." She blinked calmly. They trudged through the snow for another few moments in silence.

"I thought it was your fault." He murmured. "I thought you took my mentor away from me. But.. I've realized that he wasn't really.. You know... As great as I thought he was." Sparkfur stopped, her eyes narrowed in confusion.

"Are you telling me that this whole time you've been a pile of moldy leaves to me because you thought I, a newborn kit, made your mentor leave you?" Waspclaw breathed in indignantly.

"We need to hurry up." He growled. She trot after him, kicking up snow, her mind racing.

"We're so talking about this later.." She growled lightly. He held up his tail, crouching to the ground. She did as well, glancing at the scattered snow-covered bushes. Tall, thin oaks were spread about, but a cluster was just a tree-length away with thick foliage. He suddenly plunged into a bush, yanking out a white, scarred cat. He pressed a heavy paw to the cat's chest, and Sparkfur limped over quickly. The cat struggled around, but seeing as it was now two-on-one it slowed to a burning glare.

"Spruce was right about you clan cats-- you're savages!" The she-cat growled. Her white chest fur began to be stained with red as

Waspclaw dug his long claws in deeper.

"Where is Spruceclaw?" Sparkfur demanded from Waspclaw's side. The she-cat bared her teeth.

"He's not to be disturbed, he's with the Lady."

Waspclaw glanced over at Sparkfur uneasily. *The Lady? What's a 'Lady.' Or should I be asking who is the Lady?*

"What do he want from the clans?" Sparkfur said suddenly, looking to Waspclaw. The she-cat bared her teeth and struck Waspclaw in the face. The white cat darted away as soon as his grip loosened, running in the direction that they came from. Waspclaw pinned his ears back, his fe on end, but turned. *I thought he was going to tear into her...* She shivered, and she wasn't sure if it was because of the lead-bare winds, or if it was something else.

"I wonder who the Lady is." Waspclaw murmured, his fur flattening. He turned, picking up Spruceclaw's scent trail once again.

"Me too.. He didn't mention a 'lady," whatever that is, when we met." Sparkfur thought aloud quietly. The snow covered foliage had started to get denser, but nowhere near as tangly and overwhelming as DrizzleClan's territory. The trees were thin and tall, a poor excuse for the thick trees that the warriors called home.

Waspclaw flicked his ears, hunkering down, swishing his tail for Sparkfur to follow suit. She didn't understand why they were trying to blend in, they stood out like blood on white fur.

She tipped her head slightly to the side as she heard quiet murmuring. She crept past Waspclaw, peeking through blanketed, sparce bushes that encircled a clearing with a large tom. Spruceclaw. He was just a big as she remembered, thick and dusky brown tabby fur rippling under a starving frame. *The rogue territory never had nearly enough prey to feed every cat, most food was taken from two-legs... that must be why he's led his cats to the forest. Not just to get rid of DrizzleClan, but to use our territory as their own!* He was pacing at the top of a small dip in the ground, a large rock sheltering it and whoever was inside.

"What's happening?" Waspclaw whispered, moving next to her. Under the cover of the bush, the howling wind wasn't biting at her fur and nipping at her sensitive ears quite as much, which she was grateful for. She flicked her ear, not quite knowing just yet.

"Lady, you have to stay here!" Spruceclaw was growling.

"I'm not expecting kits, for the last time!" A she-cat growled. Sparkfur couldn't see the cat, but she found the words most perplexing. *The Lady is a she-cat.*

"I'm not arguing about this with you now-- I need to go into battle. I have cats to lead!" He turned, and the golden tabby's fur rose sharply. She *swore* he was looking right at them. But his eyes seemed to glance right over them.

"Please, Spruce!" the Lady cried out. A growl rumbled in Waspclaw's throat and he stepped out of the shelter of the bush, snow shaking down and covering Sparkfur's pelt. Spruceclaw's eyes narrowed in surprise, fur fluffing up.

"Wasppaw!" He purred, malice lacing his voice. Sparkfur crept out after him, trying not to put weight on her hind leg while also trying not to look as injured as she was. "...and Sparkfur." Something harsh, something she couldn't identify, was all she could hear now.

"It's Waspclaw."

"Not in my opinion. You haven't earned that name yet, not for me." Spruceclaw was just as big as Waspclaw, and Sparkfur stood as her full height to try to compete in size. She was nowhere close.

"I guess I'll just have to prove it to you!" Waspclaw growled, unsheathing his claws. Spruceclaw scoffed, waving his thin tail.

"Alright. We'll get into the whole battle thing later, I've got a kit to talk to," he completely changed his attention from the DrizzleClan deputy to Sparkfur. "Amazing-- maybe you are worth something!" Waspclaw glanced over at Sparkfur to see her reaction. Cold, icy stair, fur flat and buffeted by the wind.

"Of course I am, I know my worth. What you think of me.. It's completely irrelevant." She narrowed her green eyes. Waspclaw's chest fur ruffled, baffled.

"My, what a sharp tongue you have. We've already been over this sort of thing, though, right? How disrespectful you are to me?" He took a step to circle Sparkfur, but Waspclaw took a step forward.

"You don't get to talk to my clanmates! You aren't one of us!" Waspclaw hissed.

"Ack. Touchy." Spruceclaw glanced over at Waspclaw with emerald eyes. "I guess it's my fault, I didn't stick around long enough to teach you about bad manners." Sparkfur remembered back when Waspclaw had jumped at Frostheart just for not speaking to Mintstar, she was surprised how composed he was keeping himself now.

"Spruce, what's going on?" the Lady called out. Spruceclaw's face brightened.

"Sparkfur! I.. I want to show you something." Waspclaw glanced over at his clanmate, who looked just as confused. The long-legged warrior tipped her head up.

"What is it?" She demanded. Spruceclaw turned, trotting over to the dip in the ground sheltered under the shade of the rock. He waved his tail.

"Come.. Meet the Lady." He purred. Sparkfur narrowed her eyes slightly. Curiosity tugged at her fur, the want to learn making her move her paws. She heard the crunch of snow as Waspclaw followed close behind her.

The golden tabby stepped to the top of the dip to look down, her eyes growing wide. A she-cat was staring expectantly up to Spruceclaw, before her warm amber eyes shifted to the warriors. She had a smooth dark pelt with patches and flecks of gingery red.

"W-What?! That's not possible!" Sparkfur gasped. "Cherryflower?!"

AN

OMGOMGOMG 100 FOLLOWERS AGGHAHHHH AND AND AND ALMOST SIX THOUSAND READS!!!

Thank you guys so much!!! I've come so far since when I started Spark. I JUST went through my entire activity tab and found the exact date I posted the prologue, which was September 12, 2015. So just over six months. This is really exciting.

Also I absolutelyz love writing Spruceclaw. He's such an unpredictable character I don't even know what he's going to say until I write it.

I did the white cat REALLY wrong in the art, I'm just now realizing how I could have made it right so don't judge lol I'm still learning xp

Longer chapter than usual :-OOOO

{twenty-nine}

[image]

Stormpaw purred, sun glimmering down on his dark gray fur. Sparkpaw was sitting off to the side, watching skeptically as the thick-furred tom told Berrypaw once again the story of Cherryflower.

"She was the most beautiful she-cat I had ever seen-- dark fur with bright ginger tortoiseshell! Even over the next half-moon though, while she was sick, she was as vibrant as when I had first seen her!" Berrypaw sucked in every word like it was fresh water. Sparkpaw flicked an ear.

"Cherryflower died.. There's no need to dwell on the past."

Bitter winds buffeted Sparkfur's pelt, but she couldn't take her eyes off of the Lady. The golden warrior didn't know what to say.

Spruceclaw laughed lightly.

"I-I don't understand!" Sparkfur cried out finally. Waspclaw's eyes were dark with anger. "How could you have lived? You died!"

"Spruceclaw stop screwing around. I remember Cherryflower," he flicked his tail, "this is not her." Sparkfur stood up straighter, her pelt getting hot.

"She's everything that Stormstrike described--" Sparkfur circled the top of the dip, tail flicking behind her.

"Who is this Cherryflower you keep mentioning?" the Lady growled, standing up. She had short, strong legs and a compact body. Sparkfur sighed. Stormstrike had described a long legged thin she-cat.

"She's looks so close to Cherryflower, though!" Spruceclaw reasoned. "Listen, Sparkfur, she's almost just like her! I've gotten you your mother!" The Lady narrowed her eyes.

"But she's not my mother! What's wrong with you,

Spruceclaw?!" Her wild fur was on end, feeling ready to cry, but not letting herself. *I'm not a weak kit. I can handle myself.. Plus I don't want to give Waspclaw another reason to think I'm an abomination.*

"Fine!" His eyes were narrowed now, fur on end. "You said it yourself, I'm not your dad. So I'm starting over-- a new DrizzleClan, a new Cherryflower, and new kits." Spruceclaw was circling, his pelt ruffling up with tension. The Lady's eyes were narrowed.

"Hey, I get a say in this!" The tortoiseshell snapped. Spruceclaw flicked his tail dismissively.

"You already did when you agreed to be my mate, Cherryflower." He hissed before turning his attention back to Sparkfur. "I have you another chance. Now you go run along and tell Mintstar what I've said. Tell him to leave our queens and kits that you stole, too. I'm not in the mood to get in a fight over that unless you refuse." Waspclaw took a paw step foreward, shoving Sparkfur behind him.

"No. As DrizzleClan deputy, I won't let you and your rogues take another paw step into our territory."

"Waspy, the border is all the way at the other end of the meadow. We're on *my* territory right now, so it's in my power to kill you."

"But that's against the warrior code!" Waspclaw growled, teeth baring.

Spruceclaw chuckled, his eyes looking the big deputy up and down.

"Oh, Waspclaw, you naïve little beech nut. I'm not a warrior.. I'm a rogue." Spruceclaw drew back into a fighting stance, a wicked smile on his square muzzle. The Lady was back to hiding in the small dip in the ground, and Sparkfur had drawn back to a low crouch just behind Waspclaw.

"Sparkfur, get out of here." Waspclaw murmured.

"I won't leave you. I don't leave clan mates behind."

"And I don't let clan mates die. Get out of here right now, that's an order!" Spruceclaw's green eyes were narrowed with interest.

Sparkfur shook her head. "StarClan, stop being so stubborn and--"

"Spruceclawww..!!!" A cry sounded. Spruceclaw stood up straight. "Spruce.. Help me.!" The dark tabby took off running immediately, abandoning his mate for whatever was more important. Waspclaw glanced over to Sparkfur briefly, his copper eyes dark with annoying and something else. It didn't last very long, because he turned and bolted in the direction Spruceclaw went. Sparkfur looked back to the Lady, who was shaking as sobs wracked her body. The tabby sighed, turning and chasing after the others through the snow.

She stopped dead in her tracks, almost running into Waspclaw who had also stopped. Blood was streaked across the snow, and Spruceclaw was gently crouched over a dark pelt. *Kole.*

"It's just a scratch..." Spruceclaw was trying to say.

"I-I can't see from my right eye!" Kole cried out. The dark tabby tom have a slight nod, his mood shifting into something dark.

"Who did this to you?" He growled. Sparkfur grounded herself, setting her paws firmly in the numbing snow. Her hind leg was still complaining of pain, but she pushed through it.

"Spark.." Kole held his head up weakly. She held his gaze evenly.

Spruceclaw turned, green eyes suddenly seeming even more menacing.

"You should learn to fight better then, Kole. She's *nothing*."

Sparkfur looked down at her paws.

"B-but Spruceclaw! I'm basically your son!" Kole wailed. Spruceclaw looked down distastefully at the young, bloody tom.

"I have a son already, Berryfoot. Unless you kill him, I refuse to accept you. I have other matters to attend to, like killing a deputy." Spruceclaw turned and instantly sprung at Waspclaw, tumbling them back into the snow.

Kole struggled to his paws, a renewed strength in his muscles. Sparkfur started toward him. *I should finish him and protect Berryfoot. He killed Ryeheart, he's capable of killing my brother.. But Waspclaw can't do this alone, no matter how much he wants to.* Kole was already starting off away. *No. By stopping Spruceclaw, I'll be stopping the rogues, and that's what Ryeheart would really want. Not Kole dead, but instead the rogues to leave our territory. He would want DrizzleClan safe. And that's what I'm going to do.*

Sparkfur pounced on Spruceclaw just before he could land a blow on Waspclaw. The dark tom hissed as she dug her claws into his back, and she let out a yelp as he dropped to the ground to roll over on her. Waspclaw grabbed her scruff right before the rogue's weight toppled her, pulling her across the snow so quick she felt him accidentally draw blood. Waspclaw gave her a small nod.

"For DrizzleClan!" He hissed, lunging into Spruceclaw, who was waiting with open paws.

For Ryeheart.

She winced as she watched the dark tom's claws slash into Waspclaw's shoulder, just missing his chest fur. Waspclaw let out a hiss in pain, and the golden warrior leaped in, clawing Spruceclaw's ear roughly. Blood poured out, staining her paw and running down his face. He swung his broad head to look at her. She didn't give him a chance to stair her down, as she turned and kicked him in the shoulder with as much force as she could muster.

He stumbled backward into to Waspclaw, who rippled their claws down Spruceclaw's flank. The tom let out a grunt of pain, and Sparkfur took his moment of weakness to pounce at him. Unfortunately, he was ready, whipping a heavy paw at to the side of her face.

She was smacked right into the unforgiving icy snow, a high pitched deafness in her ear and eyesight edging with strangely colored blackness. She tried to get to her paws, but found herself incapable as she fell right back down. She slowly blinked her eyes, trying to get a grip on the slow reality, her gaze sweeping over the situation. Waspclaw abandoned his fight to rush over to her, his

mouth moving as he spoke something, Spruceclaw turning quickly to fetch the Lady and run. Sparkfur blinked again, sound returning to her ear. Her head pounded, and she looked up at Waspclaw, but not quite catching what he was saying.

"..whah...?" She blinked again, slowly.

"Are you okay?!" Reality rushed in, and she breathed sharply.

"I--yeah-- Spruceclaw's getting away!" She staggered to her paws, needing Waspclaw's support not to fall back into the snow. Waspclaw looked at her briefly, his face unreadable, before he turned, dashing after the leader. Sparkfur let herself fall back down, relishing in the rest. *I'm doing it Ryeheart. I'm getting revenge-- your way.* She closed her eyes, only for a moment, sunlight's rays almost at the bare tree-top.

"Sparkfur!" She lifted her head blearily. Waspclaw was covered in wounds, but was pulling an even more battered Spruceclaw at his side. The Lady was close behind. Sparkfur looked up into the sky, the sun now high in the sky.

"What happened..?" She whispered, standing up shakily. Waspclaw glanced proudly over to the Lady, who wasn't looking near as proud.

"Spruceclaw agreed to stop the battle."

AN

HOW WAS IT? I thought the whole "and then she blacked out" was a bit cliché for a cutoff so I was like "screw it sparky is a strong independent she-cat," and gave you guys a proper ending ^^ I've already started chapter 30 and I've realize WE'VE COME SO FAR!! I'm already thinking about the epilogue and idk guys I'm kinda excited for the end but then at the same time I don't want it to be over hah.

ALSO I need your opinion on Waspclaw. And is anybody wondering what the frick went down while Sparkfur was asleep? Bc I am lol jk I already know what happened. Any thoughts on anything? I loVe

seeing your comments!!!

Extra notes: I didn't proof read this *peace sign* also the art piece is by me and is a sketch so it should be noted that **Kole is a charcoal tabby**, not light gray tabby. That was just how I colored it.

TALK TO YOU SOON!

-Tea

{thirty}

Sparkfur was at the front of the patrol; she knew Waspclaw had asked her to take the lead so that he could watch Spruceclaw's every move from the rear of the patrol. He had said it was so that she could help guide them back to the battle sight, but a newborn kit could figure out where the fight was just by listening and following Kole's blood trail.

I'm sure Berryfoot was able to fight Kole off-- I did injure him pretty badly to begin with. But you never really know with rogues.... She quickened her pace, taking bigger steps. She'd need to get back, see what had happened. If Berryfoot was okay, if Frostheart was okay. StarClan, if *Lambflower* was okay.

"You know, Sparkfur, I only wanted to restart DrizzleClan. An honorable version though. One where medicine cats don't murder cats--"

"Asterfoot didn't murder Cherryflower." Sparkfur murmured, a hint of annoyance touching her voice. Spruceclaw raised a brow before quickening his pace so he was shoulder-to-shoulder with her.

"Ah. Of course, you were raised to think that. You don't know every bit of the story. Asterfoot refused to give her catmint, even though her sickness could be treated with catmint. Amberpaw had told me catmint treats greencough-- speaking of which, how's Amberpaw?"

"None of your business!" Sparkfur growled, taking long, limping strides.

"Ah, come on! At least tell me more about Berryfoot. Does he have a mate? Any little Spruceclaw and Berryfoots running around?" Sparkfur glanced over at him, her eyes burning into his pelt with as much hate as she could.

"You are not my father, nor Berryfoot's. Go back to your fake mate." she growled, turning her head to look at the snow covered field ahead. She could see Thrushcall's body just up ahead at the bottom of the hill, cats were still fighting at the top.

Spruceclaw looked down in interest at the cold, stiff body of the cream tabby warrior. Sparkfur kept moving.

"So exciting....!" Spruceclaw murmured, eyes bright.

"Go eat crow-food." Sparkfur growled. She bounded up the slope, ready to stop the fighting. "Come on, hurry!" she called. Spruceclaw took his time up the hill, the Lady joining Sparkfur quickly. The rogue leader looked up thoughtfully, the sun outlining Sparkfur's thin frame. Waspclaw nudged Spruceclaw roughly, and the dark tom hissed something about personal space.

"Back when you were an apprentice, you respected me a lot more...," Spruceclaw growled as he reached the top. Waspclaw curled his lip, but flicked his tail.

"He's not worth it," he growled lowly to Sparkfur. Sparkfur was barely listening, she was too busy looking for the bright flash of Berryfoot's pelt. She held her breath, unable to see him in the fray.

"My rebels!" Spruceclaw's voice called out, full and charming. He had climbed a top a snow-dusted rock. "Stop!" It took a moment for the cats to stop clawing each other. Sparkfur desperately scanned the bloodied masses. "You have all fought so bravely for your future. To rid the prey-rich forests of the evil that occupies it. However, this evil is unwilling to leave, no matter how many we kill."

"Then we need to kill them all!" A rebel called out. A few other rebels purred their agreement.

"We don't have time, and I don't want to sacrifice any more of our hard-working cats," more rebels agreed with this statement. "Therefore, we need to claim other territory as our own. While you were all so bravely fighting I found some land that will feed us as well as leaf-bare will allow."

"How do we even know that you are our real leader? We never met the Leader!" A cat called out. Sparkfur swiveled her ears, not as interested in rogue talk. Cecil, the cat in charge of trainees, spoke, confirming that Spruceclaw was the leader. *Where is Berryfoot? I can't find him anywhere!* Spruceclaw stood, waving his tail.

"We need to move now if we want to set territory markers by moonrise." Spruceclaw announced. A caterwaul of prideful cried sounded from the rogues, but Sparkfur couldn't decide why. If any cat won, it was the Clans, not the rogues. Just like that, they fled. All of them. They flooded past Sparkfur. One nearly knocked her over, but Waspclaw pulled her close to him with a large paw.

"Where's Berryfoot?!" Sparkfur murmured, shutting her eyes tightly, snow crystals being kicked up in her eyes as bloodied cats raced past her. Finally, Waspclaw stepped away from her, and she opened her eyes to feel the rumbling in the cold earth had faded, and the only cat left was Spruceclaw on top of his rock, watching over. A few more rogues were still limping past, others just taking their time, and a few trying to drag bodies of friends. The warriors had all turned to their fallen clanmates, gently nursing their wounds until some cat had grabbed the medicine cats. Sparkfur spotted Kole slowly limping away in the distance, too far for her to claw his pelt off though. Spruceclaw's eyes met hers.

"You really do remind me of your mother," Spruceclaw murmured. Waspclaw had his head tipped up suspiciously, but Sparkfur held the dark tabby with an icy stair. He flicked his silver-haired tail, standing and turning. He looked over a broad shoulder. "But also a little of myself."

He bounded down from the rock, trotting to catch up with his rogues. Sparkfur didn't stay to watch, as she tore away to look at the dead. She watched Waspclaw from the corner of her eye' he was also checking to see if any cats were alive. She spotted the bright white fluffy form of Frostheart, and she dashed over, heart racing. Her delicate ears were bloody, the unhearing left one had a large nick in it, the right one had a few smaller splits. She let out a small, breathy laugh as she saw the rise and fall of the young white cat's chest. *She's alive. But I don't believe for a second Berryfoot would ever leave her in battle.* Sparkfur looked down at Frostheart. She didn't

want to leave the small cat,but she had to. She had to find Berryfoot.

She padded across the snowy field, the scent of the DrizzleClan border hitting her hard on the nose. The grass was taller there, although flattened and torn up where cats had fought. There were thick trees here and there, the forest line still a tree-length or two away. She stepped around a fallen rogue, trying not to look too hard, knowing there was a chance she would recognize them. She heard a soft cough and quickened her pace, her eyes falling on a cat as red as a fox, tabby stripes woven over their thick, broad pelt. Berryfoot. She gently padded over, sitting down. He had his shoulder pressed against a dusky tree to hold himself up, his head low. The top of his right ear was completely shredded, blood soaking the side of his face. She gave him a soft, playful prod to the shoulder. He winced, but still gave her a weak smile.

"You sicked a one-eyed cat on me?" He joked. She gave her tail a flick.

"He had it in his head that we were basically from the Dark Forest."

"Dark Forest? Isn't that a kit story?" He gave her a challenging look, and she gave one right back.

"Lucky he didn't shred you completely," she changed the subject slightly. He tried to get up, huffing as his shoulder wasn't able to completely take his weight. She stood up, taking her place at his side, where he leaned against her.

"Holy falcons, you weigh more than a badger..!" she grunted, her hind paw breaking the surface of the frozen-over snow as she tried to plant her paws.

Together, they worked their way back to where Frostheart and Waspclaw were, Berryfoot breaking away the last few strides to rush over to Frostheart. Waspclaw flicked his tail.

"You ready?" He murmured, copper eyes focused ahead to the tree line. She gazed around at the DrizzleClan cats around her, all

covered in blood. She blinked, their eyes locking.

"Yeah."

AN

It's late. But I have NO idea when the best time is to post stuff so that most of my readers are online so I hope you checked your newsfeed. THIS IS NOT THE END. REPEAT. THIS. IS. NOT. THE. END. There will be another chapter and an Epilogue.

Also sorry if there aren't any indents, I'm doing this chapter from my computer rather than my phone (yes, I did type this entire story on mobile. Rip me.)

{headcanons : 5}

I almost forgot that it's time for a headcanons chapter! Here go's;

- Daisy died in the Great Battle in the last chapter.

- I wanted to have Cypressfoot / Rust make a reappearance all nasty and clawed up by Waspclaw bUT I never got around to it...

- I think a cool warrior name for Briarkit would be Briarfrost? Idk though, I'm open to ideas. He may or may not being showing up in the next book ;;;;;-)

- The next book WILL NOT be centered around our lovely Sparkfur. It'll be centered around a MarshClan apprentice and a DrizzleClan warrior.

- I almost killed Berryfoot off but then I was like nahh better not

- spellcheck once replaced Kole with Moldy. I think that's accurate.

- LAMBFLOWER ISNT DEAD AHA She's for sure going to pop up in the last chapter. I can't help myself.

- BerryFrost's kits are genetically correct for the most part. I tried to stay as genetically correct as I could.

Also, sorry if you thought this was chapter 31.

{thirty-one}

[image]

"Sparkfur... Sparkfur!" Thunder crashed in the sky, rain pummeling down on the stone roof of Sparkfur's den. She blinked her eyes open blearily. Big kit-blue eyes met hers.

"Hm..?" she mumbled sleepily.

"....I'm scared." Her eyes adjusted, and she could see Briarkit much clearer now. His dark fur was on end, his eyes wide. She glanced over to where Frostheart lay asleep; Squirrelkit, Emberkit, and Hazelkit also resting quietly next to their mother. *Why can't Briarkit be that sound of a sleeper?* She looked back at Briarkit. His eyes were wide and scared. She sighed, turning onto her side.

"What're you afraid of?" She murmured quietly. He blinked.

"The loud sounds. The.. lightning?"

"Thunder. The sound is called thunder,"

"Yeah. The thunder. It's scary." He nuzzled close to her belly fur, and she looked down at him awkwardly. She didn't know what to do. Frostheart was asleep, and it was close to impossible to wake the ex-FogClan cat.

"Here, come on." Sparkfur stood up, leaning down and picking up the under-sized kit. Briarkit let out a startled mew, luckily not disturbing the sleep of his denmates. *Looks like they inherited something other than white fur from their mother...*

The rain pummeled down on Sparkfur the moment she stepped out of the den, and she kept her head low so that Briarkit didn't get wet. She moved quickly, making a bee-line straight for the bramble den. She poked her head in, her eyes moving across the sleeping bodies of huge cats. She carefully maneuvered around several cats till she reached the center of the huddle of cats. Her eyes moved past

Berryfoot, who was sound asleep, to Waspclaw, who's eyes were half open.

The big dark striped tom blinked his copper eyes open all the way, looking up at Sparkfur, water dribbling off her fur onto him.

"I don't know what to do...," she whispered. He gave her a confused look, but as lightning lit up the den, followed by a rather loud crash of thunder, Briarkit let out a scared squeak, and Waspclaw stood up in understanding.

"Come on," he murmured. He led the way out of the den, straight for the medicine den. They bounded down the huge rock platform steps, careful not to slip on the rain that had managed to get inside the opening. The big open main den was mostly empty, only a single medicine cat remained at the herb storage at the back wall. Sparkfur recognized her as Fawnheart, a light brown she-cat who could never sleep through the nights. Waspclaw gave no notice to the spotted medicine cat, heading straight for one of the patient wings. They had been empty for the past moon, since all the cats had healed from the battle and the fresh New-Leaf winds had brought enough strength for them to fight green cough just as it had started to spread.

He settled down in a nest, Sparkfur setting Briarkit down next to the huge tom. The den was a little chilly, but it was dry and the sounds of thunder were dulled.

"You know the story of TigerClan and LionClan?" Waspclaw breathed. Briarkit shook his head. Waspclaw glanced over to Sparkfur, who smiled sheepishly. "TigerClan warriors are great big tabby cats, and LionClan are even bigger cats with pelts like the sun and thick fur around their necks. They're up in the sky, right now, battle training, you know?"

"Training to fight the rogues?" Briarkit's face brightened. Sparkfur's gazed darkened. Waspclaw brushed it off. *I didn't think he was listening to Frostheart's stories about the rogues.*

"No, the rogues are gone. But up in the sky, the clans are at battle with each other. You can hear them fighting too--" he was cut off by

a muted crash of thunder. "There, that was a TigerClan apprentice falling on his tail!" Waspclaw grinned. Briarkit laughed, bouncing on his toes.

"I want to be a LionClan warrior!" He growled playfully. "Sparkfur--you and Waspclaw are both TigerClan!" He announced. Sparkfur grinned and got to her paws. Waspclaw looked over at her.

"Are you sure we should be playing a game? It's moonhigh--"

"Come on Wasp*star*. There's a LionClan warrior on our territory!" She lowered to the ground, tail flashing behind her. Briarkit's face brightened. A crash of thunder sounded, and it cued him to leap onto Sparkfur's scarred shoulder. She feigned pain, falling back onto the ground. She squirmed under Briarkit's prodding paws, and he let out squeaks of pride.

"I didn't realize it, but this warrior must be Briarflame the Great!" He picked the small kit up by the scruff, and the young tom bat his hind legs at Waspclaw, prompting the huge deputy to drop him onto the ground. With great kit-like resilience, he landed on four paws. Sparkfur backed up, fur fluffed up and tail high.

"Waspstar we should run..!" Sparkfur nodded to Briarkit, who had his fur fluffed up, his eyes shining.

"Great or not, *Briarflame* should be running! No LionClan warrior trespasses on my territory!" Waspclaw purred, ears back. Briarkit laughed and dashed away on short kit legs, and Sparkfur took a tremendous bound to cut him off. He giggled brightly, turning quickly and heading in the other direction. Waspclaw pounced foreward, catching the kit and bringing them both tumbling to the ground.

Briarkit opened his mouth in a wide yawn, in between a laugh, blinking sleepily. Waspclaw grinned, tipping his head up from where he had fallen. Sparkfur padded over, laying down and drawing a nest together out of scattered scraps of moss and bracken. The small dark cat didn't need to be told to go to bed, he crawled into the nest with worn legs and plopped down. Sparkfur curled around the nest, perfectly fine on the dirt floor. She closed

her eyes as soon as she heard Briarkit whisper a good-night, the dulled sound of rain pattering and thunder lulling her to sleep.

”

Sparkfur blinked her eyes open as something tickled her nose, an unmemorable dream escaping her. A ginger tail with dark tabby stripes filled her vision. Waspclaw's tail was brushing against her nose. She picked her head up to see the dull tabby tom grooming his fur for the day.

"Sorry to wake you-- I have duties to attend to." Sparkfur looked down at Briarkit, who was still asleep. Dawn light filtered in from the main clearing of the medicine den, outlining Waspclaw's well-muscled features.

"No worries." She drew her tail close to her body. "Thanks for last night-- I'm not very good with kits." She began cleaning the dirt out of her own pelt.

"I just remembered the stories they told me when I was a kit. How did you not know that story?" He laughed gently. She narrowed her eyes, her fur hot with embarrassment. She gave her chest fur a few licks before she was able to respond.

"Asterfoot never told me stories, he just explained what was going on. Instead of stories of LionClan, I got stories of thunder and lightning. The power that they hold-- causing fires and scaring cats. But also that they brought strength to warriors and rain to the ground." He raised a brow.

"I forgot you were raised by a medicine cat..." he mumbled. A few moments passed before he asked another question. "How did you even get Briarkit?" Sparkfur flicked her ears up with interest. She looked down at the dark brown kit, who was sound asleep.

"When I was undercover with the rogues, a queen gave him up to a kittypet so that he wouldn't be killed in battle training. Spruceclaw would send kits into training as soon as they could tumble and play. A lot of queens did that-- gave their kits away to kittypets. I took him from the kittypet." Sparkfur drew her tongue over a paw,

washing her ears. Waspclaw stood up, stretching.

"I've got to go and assign tomorrow's patrols." He flicked his tail, padding out. Sparkfur scoffed, looking down at Briarkit. She poked her head out of the room, seeing Asterfoot picking through the herbs for something specific. His apprentice, Thistlepaw, was at his side, whispering herb names to himself.

"Asterfoot?" Sparkfur called out. The blue-gray tom looked over his shoulder, his eyes wide with surprise.

"I didn't know you were in the medicine den." He meowed, turning his full attention to her.

"Briarkit was scared of the storm last night. He's asleep in the sick den.. Can you watch him?" Asterfoot glanced over to Thistlepaw. The young light gray and white tom's ears pricked, and he turned to Asterfoot.

"Fawnheart will be there, I can do it on my own!" Thistlepaw begged. Sparkfur twitched an ear, confused. She noticed raspberry leaves and fennel already pulled out. *Fennel is for hip pain, and raspberry is for pain relief... I think. And queens can't have poppy seeds*-- "Sparkfur, I'm capable enough to handle a kitting without Asterfoot, right?" He held her gaze with pleading amber eyes. She blinked, sitting down.

"Well I don't actually know much about your skills...," she glanced over to Asterfoot, who was just as tall as his apprentice. The senior tom sighed deeply, blinking slowly and tiredly. "I'm sure you can handle a kitting with just the help of Fawnheart rather than Fawnheart *and* Asterfoot." Thistlepaw's face lit up and he looked over to his mentor.

"See? She doesn't give out praises like that to just any cat-- I can do it!" He bounced to his paws. Asterfoot held his apprentice's gaze for another heartbeat before giving a stiff nod. The young tom purred loudly, running his head against the blue tom's shoulder, grabbing the herbs, and dashing out of the den before the medicine cat could change his mind.

"As I was saying, would you mind watching Briarkit?" Asterfoot gave a slight nod. "You need some rest. This'll be good for you." Sparkfur murmured, leading Asterfoot to the side den.

"I'm not that old..." He mumbled.

"But you are tired," he blinked indignantly, "besides, it won't be for too long. He'll be awake as soon as the sun is all the way up." Asterfoot thought for a moment and settled down in the scraps of a nest next to the tiny kit.

Sparkfur waved her tail and bounded out of the medicine den, glad to finally be out. *Kits are so much of a responsibility.* She started toward the nursery where Grey had moved to, when a certain white she-cat caught her eye. *That little pigeon...* Lambflower. Sparkfur flexed her claws. Just looking at the white cat made her cringe. She kept moving to the nursery, ignoring the she-cat who was stretched out in the weak morning light and calling a tom over with a purr. She cringed and stepped into the warm den.

The Leaf Nursery was where all the rogue queens stayed, and was made out of the Cedar Den's boughs. The kits were just waking up, most around two to four moons now. It didn't take long for Grey's kits to notice her and come tumbling out of their mother's nest.

"Sparkfur, Sparkfur, I learned a new game yesterday, and I was going to show you but you were gone!" Dawnkit purred, her words tumbling out of her mouth too fast for her to articulate them properly. The three kits bounced at the scarred warrior's paws, their eyes bright.

"Dawnkit, Ashkit, Lilykit, get back here!" Grey hissed. Other queens had poked their heads up slowly to watch. Dawnkit ducked her head sheepishly, slowly making her way back to her nest. Grey had renamed her kits to 'proper Clan names.'

"*Hazel will have to be Ashkit, then, because Frostheart named her little brown tabby Hazelkit." Grey murmured, giving Hazel's gray tabby cheek a lick. He grumbled, annoyed.*

"What's wrong with our names now?" Florence mumbled, avoiding

a lick from her mom.

"You're part of a clan now." Sparkfur groomed her own golden fur.

"I like my *new name!" Lilykit purred. Florence poked her sister with a soft paw.*

*"That's because you used to be Lily, and now you're Lily*kit. *I don't think Florencekit is allowed...."*

"Then how about Dawnkit, for your cream fur?" Sparkfur offered. Florence's amber eyes lit up.

"Oh, that's cool!" She yipped, dancing in a circle before tripping over clumsy legs.

"What are you doing today, Sparkfur?" Dawnkit purred, her tail swishing behind her as she sat up. Ashkit had settled back down with his paws tucked under him, and Lilykit was purring softly as she looked up at the much bigger cat.

"I'm going hunting at the border." She purred. "Do you want anything?" Dawnkit nodded vigorously.

"Thrush, it's my favorite!" She purred.

"Dawnkit, what do you say?" Her murmured purred softly.

"Oh-- please!" Sparkfur gave the kit a soft prod with her paw.

"I'll get one," the golden warrior stood up, and the kits beamed.

"One day, I'll be that big..!" Ashkit whispered to Lilykit before picking his eyes back up.

"I'll see you soon." Sparkfur waved her tail, padding out of the den.

Arden was sitting outside of the den, her feathery silver tail wrapped around pale paws while she watched over her kit tussle with an apprentice. Spark sat down next to her.

"Silverkit is becoming an apprentice in a moon," Arden

murmured,"I think he'll have a real future here." She glanced over to Sparkfur. The golden tabby nodded, watching the silver tabby get pinned to the ground by the apprentice, a white tom with gray smoky patches here and there.

"Mom, Sootpaw is too much for me!" Silverkit squeaked, pulling free from the apprentice. Sootpaw beamed happily, his tail waiving.

"Then you'll have to keep trying." Arden murmured. Sparkfur narrowed her eyes. "Go back. Try again." Silverkit took a deep breath in before crouching down and pouncing at the bigger cat.

"He's just a kit..." Sparkfur mewed sharply. Arden's ice blue eyes seemed to pierce right into her.

"Like I said. He has a future in this clan, and I'll make sure he gets there. I won't have any regrets." Sparkfur stood up. This wasn't a rarity in DrizzleClan. Many mothers had done this to their kits in the past.

She padded past and out the exit of camp, into the forest. She glanced over at her stone den, hearing loud meows of Squirrelkit squabbling with her sister, Hazelkit. Sparkfur turned quickly, not wanting to get in the middle of it. *Besides, I've got a thrush to catch.*

The forest was still. She weaved around brambles and ferns, and giving an ear flick of a hello to a passing black tom she vaguely recognized. She scented the air, surprised to find Waspclaw's scent. She followed it hastily, padding across a fallen tree and skirted around a bramble thicket, hiking up a steep, muddy, wet-leafed hill while avoiding patches of thistles. She stopped suddenly at the top, her eyes taking in the scene.

The hilltop was a small space enough for a few cats, which overlooked the river border. Waspclaw sat with his back to her atop of a rock, but as she silently leaped up next to him, he had already known it was her.

"We take it all for granted." He murmured. She sat down, wrapping her tail around her white paws.

"The territory?" Sparkfur looked over at him briefly before averting her gaze to the land below her. Tall grass swept down the other side of the hill, trees scattered but getting thinner near the river border. Plants and herbs grew high next to the river, with reeds gathered at the water's shimmering edge.

"The territory. Our friends. Everything. The future generations won't even understand what we've done to ensure our territory will be ours. They won't know what *you* did. You fought your father--"

"And lost miserably..."

"It doesn't matter. He was your flesh and blood.. But you still fought him for your clan. And future cats won't care. They'll be too busy worrying about themselves, worrying about becoming a Bramble Den warrior, to think about who's around them and who's made it possible that they can even have a chance of becoming a Bramble Den warrior."

"Clans aren't as drawn together as we should be, I get it." Sparkfur nodded. The sun was just up above the hills in the distance.

"If I become leader, I'll make sure kits learn about the Rogue Wars." His mind seemed to be clearer now, words coming out with more sense.

"Even if you don't become leader, I'm sure Berryfoot would listen to you about that."

"No-- I want to make the clan whole. I want every cat to have a proper burial, I want bush den warriors and bramble den warriors to be equals, I want to know what clanmate just had kits, I want to know what clanmate is suffering from old bones. I don't want to take things for granted anymore...!" Waspclaw's claws were unsheathed, his amber eyes intense with the morning sun glimmering off their surface.

Sparkfur took in a deep breathe.

"I want that too." She whispered.

They were silent for a while. Birds twittered brightly, swooping in the sky. Sparkfur could spot a FogClan patrol on the other side of the river as they checked the scents.

"I'm sorry I was so mean to you." Waspclaw broke the silence. "I don't know why. I just did it to do it..." He looked down at his paws. *He's changed so much-- but so have I.*

"I was mean to you too." Was all she said. He closed his eyes, taking in a deep breath with relief.

Sparkfur nodded her head in the direction of where the river branched off into a creek, a willow just barely visible. "That's where Ryeheart is buried." She murmured. A purr rumbled in his throat.

"I knew Ryeheart. He was supposed to join the Bramble Den, you know?" He looked over at her. Sparkfur's eyes were wide with shock. "I thought he was an amazing cat. Not the best fighter, but he had the spirit of a warrior. I'll never match up to him." Waspclaw sighed. Sparkfur stood up.

"No cat will ever be like Ryeheart. But you try, and in your own way, you're getting to be just as great of a cat." Waspclaw's face brightened, his ears forward. He stood up as well.

"We should go and visit him then," he held his tail up high. Sparkfur tipped her head to the side.

"What-- his willow tree?"

"Yeah! Rye's Willow. That's what we'll call that spot. I noticed there was some of that river plant at his vigil--"

"Watermint?"

"Yeah, yeah, watermint. We should get some to bring to him." Sparkfur purred, leading the way down the hill with caution.

"I think there's some just at the river bend."

"Lead the way."

AN

Epilogue in progress.

Also if you're interested, I posted the completed character guide.

{epilogue}

[image]

Sunset light warmed Mintstar's pale gray fur as he picked up an adder he had just caught. He panted heavily, a proud gleam in his green eyes for having escaped death. He hadn't seen the adder when it sprung at him with venomous teeth, but he had managed to kill it without being bit.

Looking out across the tall grassy border, he shifted, brown striped adder in his jaws. The rogues were gone, and his clan was safe. He had done his job as leader.

Turning, the long haired tom began making his way back into the forest when he spotted a cat at the edge of his forest. He stiffened. A rogue? Scenting the air, he realized it was a DrizzleClan cat, female. He waved his tail and she stood up, brown tabby fur glimmering with red light. She padded toward him, she had small white paws and a white chest.

"Hello." Mintstar murmured, dropping his adder.

"Hello, Mintstar." She greeted. He took in her scent-- she smelled like sweet oaks.

"You look so young-- did I make you a warrior?" *My sly way of asking her name...*

"Oh, no, Kestrelstar did." She neared him, and he couldn't help but stay still, wanting to be even closer to her beautiful pelt.

"Yeah.. Kestrelstar was great... What's your name?" He whispered. Suddenly, she unsheathed her claws, leaping forward with a sudden ferocity, raking her claws down his throat and chest.

Mintstar fell back onto the yellow grass, fading sunlight casting a glow over his pelt, shimmering across the crimson blood that spilled out. His paws twitched as his life drained out of him.

"Sorry, Mintstar, but I have plans for our clan... And you're in the way." She licked her white paw, looking distastefully down at the gray tabby tom. "Tell StarClan I said hello." She purred, turning and padding into the darkened forest.

AN

Art belongs to Finch-wing on tumblr.

The killer has been identified by name thanks to cloverponyz who guessed it first.

{author's note}

AN

WELL THAT WAS A WILD RIDE

I'm so happy ahh!! This was super great <33 I couldn't have done it without all of your votes and comments and just agh. I love you all so much!

Thanks for baring through my spelling errors and sporadic updating! I'd like to say "oh yeah I'll get better at it in the future" but that would be a total lie because I'll never be able to do a constant updating schedule haha!

While most writers will typically tag users who commented the most or mean the most o men's or whatever, I don't have enough time to tag all of you. You were all amazing support, and I loved reading every single comment, feedback, praise, every bit. I don't think I would have even followed through with WaspSpark if you guys hadn't commented "I ship it!!" So thanks so much guys! You mean a lot to me!

I really enjoyed making a story that is unique to other fanfics on wattpad and bringing you something fresh and different. I really want to keep on doing that! SO my dear readers, I need to know.

A sequel to this that I've been kind of planning about a cat in DrizzleClan and a cat in MarshClan set a few moons after this during a time when more of the clan politics are happening. Drawing the clans together, not agreeing, doing it by force, and it'll be the story behind the eyes of two young cats in the middle of a war.

Or

A human warrior cats that I actually have the entire living system planned. It's humans with cat tail and ears and they live by

the warrior code and such, but it's slightly different because they have the warrior rank and the crafter rank. Crafters make clothing and weapons because they're humans and need that. They also trade with other clans, because you can't get everything you need from one single territory. The story will be from some cats pov I can't decide yet, and there will be a lot of drama with the other clans since they depend so heavily on each other.

Or

BOTH. Have two stories running at the same time. Updating would be a little slower, or it may be quicker because I'll keep being refreshed rather than on one story for a long time.

UPDATE:
I do have the sequel posted, it's called Fight or Flight.

{fanart}

[image] [image] [image] [image] [image][image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image] [image][image]

Ahh I love fan art so much!!! If you've ever drawn Sparkfur or any of her buds tell me and I'll add it! Don't worry, I give credit! Please comment and tell me if you do fanart too!

Both of the above are by @A_Lost_Consultant on Wattpad! I love the softness of it, soft brushes are actually my favorite to use!

This was actually something I requested from @pedepak because their style is adorable!!

I'm also trying to find another piece I remember, it was a bunch of character sketches? And it was really cute!! And I can't find it aaa so if you know what I'm talking about or if it was you please tell me because I loved it!! <3

6/23/16 : more by @A_Lost_Consultant !! Ahh Berryfoot is makin me laugghhh he's such a goof xP Thy also did Starlingwing, who if you remember was that one character that Sparkfur found dead during the final battle!

7/22/16 A very very adorable Sparky by Crescentfirefly !! I absolutely love it so much <333

1/2/16 Art by @IcicleUnknown
Jesus Christ this looks so good I can't even,,, the style is just so pure and they even used her new design it's so good ahh

5/14/17
THIS GORGEOUS PIECE BY @glorytsunami
SHE'S SO SASSY AND HE'S SO MAD LOL

DrawCast pieces:
So I had held a DrawCast contest a while back if you read the authors notes you'd remember, and here are all of the entries!

This one was the first place voted by paintingPaw on DrawCast! She's a really fantastic artist and person^^

This one was by WarriorCats1206 on DrawCast. She, too, is also a very lovely artist, and her humans rock! She got second in the contest c: although this will forever be the chapter that people comment "NOOO" on. Also lol remember when Moldy-- I mean-- Kole had both eyes working lol haha

This was fourth place winner, Sky Dog on DrawCast!! Absolutely amazinggg!! They actually placed fourth; the third place winner took down their drawing though so I can't show it to you guys.

This was by Moonwolf77 on DrawCast, and they did everybody!! So good omggg even an angry Waspclaw :3 he was such a cutie back when he was salty lol

The last entry in the contest was by my best good buddy friend, AnaiisChloe24DD !! Ahh I love Frostheart <3333

If you have any fanart that you've made, comment and I'll add it!!

9/12/17 TWO YEAR ANNIVERSARY YO YO this one is by me, poppytea lol. Asterfoot looks high ahahaaaa rip. Also I should've added Ryeheart,, I put this in the fanart chapter because I didn't want to make a whole chapter about myself in this book lol. Last year I did some one-shots for the one year anniversary but this year I was lazy.